

DECEMBER,
1961



254

LIGUORIAN



**Fight
or
Die?**



**Everybody's
Bambino**



**How to Get
the Most
Out of
Christmas**



**Are You
Generous
with God?**





THE Liguorian

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and to All That
Brings Happiness to
Human Beings

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THE LIGUORIAN

LIGUORI, MO.

DONALD F. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

THERE is no time of the year when practically the whole of society in which we live offers us so many reminders of a great spiritual truth as Christmas. It does not matter that many of these public reminders of Christmas are commercially inspired or set before us by people who themselves do not believe in the truth of which Christmas is a celebration. It is something to be thankful for that, for six or more weeks before Christmas, we cannot possibly escape reminders that this feast is close at hand.

Cities decorate their streets; store-keepers fill their windows with designs and goods that bear the stamp of Christmas; people talk about Christmas; relatives plan get-togethers for the feast; individuals of every kind of religious faith and of none prepare greetings and presents for those they love.

It would be a shame if those who believe in Jesus Christ, and in the truth that Christmas celebrates His coming into the world, were not to make the most of the free publicity that is thus given to the one truth that should have the greatest practical bearing on their lives. It is a shame that many do take part in giving external publicity to the coming of Christmas, without letting the truth it represents make an impact on their own souls.

How does one get the most out of Christmas? Simply by letting the free and universal advertising that this feast (no matter by what commercial or unworthy motives inspired) be-

How to Get the Most Out of Christmas

Instead of bemoaning the abuses of advertising in connection with preparations for Christmas, read this and see how all such advertising can be made to serve the most important purpose in the world.

come a constant reminder of three truths that must be made into personal convictions. The first is the conviction that we need Christ; the second is the conviction that we can find Christ only in His Church; the third is the conviction that we must unite ourselves to Christ in His Church.

I. The conviction that we need Christ

IF we really want to get the most out of Christmas, we should determine, when the first outbreak of Christmas advertising appears, that every Christmas tree and streamer

and colored light, every store window decoration, every carol heard sung, every mention of Christmas on radio and TV or in the newspapers (even though it be in connection with a sales pitch) will suggest to us how absolutely and inescapably we need Christ in our souls and in our lives.

This is the essence of the faith of a Christian. He does not believe that Christ is someone Whom he can take or leave alone. He believes that his life can have no meaning, his mind no answers to its serious questions, his heart no love that will satisfy, without his total surrender to the rule of Jesus Christ.

The conviction that such a surrender must be made is based on this simple fact: there are gaping needs in our human nature that can be filled only by Jesus Christ. If one were to look on human nature as a very complicated lock that only one key in the whole world, and in the history of the world, could open, one would find that key in Jesus Christ.

Perhaps the one word that best expresses all the weakness and insecurity of human nature is the word "frustration." Frustration means wanting something with an overpowering instinctive force and not being able to have it. In its extreme form frustration causes mental and emotional diseases marked by a total inability to face the realities of life or to live like a normal human being. Yet even those of us who are called normal experience frustrations for which there is no cure except in what is offered to us by Jesus Christ.

Consider just a few of the frustrations that must be experienced by every human being, that can be resolved into a sense of fulfillment and security only through Jesus Christ.

1. *We all want the life in us to continue*; we abhor death and all that leads to death. This is not just a vague ideal or an arbitrary dream. A capacity for continuing life, an appetite for immortality, has been created into our very nature as spiritual beings. Every symptom of approaching disease or old age or death itself starts a conflict within us, awakens a sense of frustration over something our whole nature craves but obviously cannot have.

How perfectly Jesus Christ resolves this frustration! He answers the very yearning of our whole being with the words: "I am come that you may have life, and have it more abundantly." He takes away our abhorrence at the thought of death with the words: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, even though he be dead, he shall live, and all they that believe in Me shall not taste death forever." Moreover, He explains that physical death is a penalty of sin; immortal life is the fruit of the redeeming sacrifice He would offer for all men on the cross.

It must always be noted that every one of His words intended to destroy our human frustration in the face of death was accompanied by some stupendous miracle designed to sweep away every last doubt as to whether His words could really effect what they promised. He raised the widow's

dead son to life; He called Lazarus from the grave where he had lain sealed up for three days; He raised Himself up from His tomb to give the everlasting lie to any man's statement that his desire for immortal life can lead only to frustration and despair.

2. *We all want love*, a perfect love for a perfectly lovable object. Here again, this is no wild and foolish aspiration. As the physical heart beats by a necessity of its nature, so the heart as the symbol of man's affective life necessarily craves perfect love. Since this is impossible to find on earth or on the natural plane, there is always frustration to be experienced in human love affairs. And the frustration becomes only more agonizing, the more a human being makes the mistake of thinking he can be satisfied by love on a purely physical or sexual plane.

Christ answers this need in two ways. First, by making it clear that God is the only adequate object for the love of a human being. This truth is contained in His very command: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart." Second, by teaching clearly that the love of anything other than God can bring true joy to a human being only if the object be looked upon as a gift of God and be loved in accord with the will and the love of God. Thus a husband will find great joy in loving his wife, and vice versa, only if both love God first, and love each other in God and for God.

3. *We all want knowledge*, especially of those truths that affect our

being, our nature, our destiny. Curiosity is built into the human mind. It has the ability to probe into the depth and length and height of things temporal and eternal, and a driving desire to do this probing and to get the answers. Without the answers a human being suffers the most acute frustration.

Christ is the only one Who can supply the answers to the questions of greatest importance to a human being. He left it to men to study and labor to satisfy their curiosity about truths of science, but He Himself answers all the major questions about man. Whence do we come? Whither are we going? How must we live? What is death? What lies beyond death? What is the right relationship between man and God? No one has ever answered these questions authoritatively and with the testimony of divine miracles except Jesus Christ.

4. *We all want goodness*. This statement may seem worthy of doubt by some. They may point to individuals who seem enamored of evil and contemptuous of what, according to the moral laws learned by reason and taught by Christ, is called good.

Yet this is only an appearance. Instinctively, in accord with his very nature, every man wants to be good. That is why those who have abandoned many accepted principles of the basic moral law still use the words "goodness" and "badness" about human conduct. Even the godless Soviet Russians use these words. Hypocrites at least pretend to be good. Adulterers would like to be chaste. Drunkards long for sobriety. Human beings

are so frustrated when they are not good, that they will make up incredibly fantastic stories to prove that they are good.

Only Christ has the answer for this yearning of human nature. He defines exactly what is good and bad, and He provides the divine strength and grace through which a man can do the good and avoid the evil. He warns us all that "without Him we can do nothing." He comforts us all with the truth that "with Him we can do all things."

These, then, are the four basic truths we should think of in the midst of the all but universal signs of Christmas that will be around us for weeks before the day arrives. We want life; we want love; we want knowledge; we want goodness. We want them because God made us so that we cannot help wanting them. That same God provided what we want in Jesus Christ His Son.

Within the major frustrations thus described are contained all the lesser ones that plague human beings. The elderly single woman feels frustrated because she never had a good opportunity to marry and love a man. Only the love of Christ can fill her need. The poor and struggling father of a large family feels frustrated because he has so few of this world's goods that others have. Only the example of the poor Christ, and the riches promised by Him to the poor, can dissipate his frustration. The sick and the shut-in feel frustrated because activity is denied them and pain is their companion. Only the resurrection of the crucified Christ

can make them realize that their frustration is only a temporary and swiftly passing cross.

II. The conviction that we can find Christ only in His Church

THE second use we should make of all the free advertising of the feast of Christmas is as a reminder of where the Christ we need is to be found. When the first such advertising appears in November, we determine to remember that Christ is not to be found in Christmas trees or decorated store windows or presents or Santa Clauses or colored lights. These are only symbols. We remember that Christ is not even to be found in the crib, inspiring though a reproduction of His birthplace may be.

The greatness of the feast of Christmas lies in the fact that, to us of this day and age, it can be celebrated with full knowledge of all that Christ did, after His birth and up to the time of His ascension into heaven, to destroy our frustrations and to fulfill all our needs.

Thus we celebrate much more than merely His birthday on Christmas. We celebrate all the stupendous miracles by which He proved that He was God, our Messiah, our Redeemer. We celebrate the memory of all that He taught us out of His divine wisdom. We celebrate His dying on the cross to repair our broken friendship with God. We celebrate all the grace He made available to us through which we become not merely servants, not merely friends, but children of God.

Where can we find the link between what He did over 1900 years ago and ourselves? Only in the Church He founded, in which and through which He arranged to continue doing what He did 1900 years ago for all human beings who would be born unto the end of time.

So the advertising of Christmas should be made to turn our thoughts to the one Church where the Christ we need is found.

In that Church He continues to work miracles, through saints, His Mother, shrines and holy places, to prove that He is there.

In that Church He continues to teach with a voice that, in all essentials, is unchanging, infallible, practically applicable to every decision we ever have to make.

In that Church He re-enacts His sacrifice on the cross in the sacrifice of the Mass every day and every hour of the day in some part of the world.

In that Church He dispenses the graces that make and keep men children of God through the sacraments He Himself designed for this purpose.

In that Church He abides as divine food in Holy Communion, as really and physically present in the tabernacle that makes every Catholic Church His home.

There are those who find it difficult to submit to the truth that the Christ Who was born in Bethlehem over 1900 years ago, and Who is needed by every human being, can be found only in the authoritative, universal, apostolic Catholic Church today. Some because they have been

reared in fear and mistrust of that one Church. Some because they are distracted from seeing the identity between Christ and the one Church He founded by the imperfections of some of its priestly and lay members. Some because that one Church refuses to give in to the demands of secularism by way of changing or relaxing divine laws concerning sex and marriage and the unity of the family.

None of these circumstances make it impossible or even inhumanly difficult for the humbly searching mind to recognize the Catholic Church as the sole complete bond of continuity between what Christ did for human beings 1900 years ago and what He is eager to do for them today.

For the millions who possess even a feeble conviction that the Christ Whose birthday Christmas celebrates is to be found continuing His life's work in the Catholic Church today, all the advertising of Christmas should be accepted gratefully as a means of turning that feeble conviction into one that is strong.

The merchants say: "Buy your Christmas presents here." Whether he buys or not, the Christian is reminded by that very offer that the Christ He needs can be found only in the Church that St. Paul called Christ's Mystical Body ever present in the world.

III. The conviction that we must unite ourselves to Christ in His Church

IT IS not enough to be reminded by Christmas advertising that we

need Christ, and that we can find Christ only in His Church. A third conviction must be added. It might be phrased in the words: "Now I must do something. I must unite myself to Christ through the means He set up for this purpose in His Church."

This can mean something different for different people.

To the person who has been living at odds with Christ, in the enmity that is called serious sin, in the frustration that always follows on seeking fullness of life outside of Christ, every reminder of Christmas should become a rebuke.

The sound of a carol, the sight of a city square Christmas tree, the gay merchandise in the shops, should be irresistible prods to thoughts like these: "I will return to Christ. I will find Him in His Church, specifically in the sacrament of confession that He designed for such as me. I will confess and repent of my sins, and He will forgive me and make me whole."

To the person whose life has become lopsided with attention to food and drink and clothing and making money and seeking material satisfactions, and who therefore inevitably finds himself encrusted with imperfections, the advertising that precedes Christmas triggers a spiritual reawak-

ening. It will make him say: "I have drifted away from Christ. Now I will seek closer union with Him. I will attend Mass during Advent. I will receive Communion every day. I will stop in a Church for a visit to Christ in the midst of each day's external preparation for Christmas.

For the person who wants to be a saint, the advertising of Christmas will inspire an intensified program designed to make Christ live in him. It will make him say: "Now I will read and learn more about Christ and His relationship to me. I will meditate for a short while every day on that relationship. I will attend Mass and receive Communion with greater fervor. I will remember Christ and His will in all my daily activities. I will make sacrifices for Him. By every prudent means I will encourage others to think of the true, total, spiritual meaning of Christmas."

Who said that the advertising of Christmas, for several weeks in advance, is overdone, overcommercialized, oversentimental? It will be none of these things to the person who turns it all into a reminder of these three truths: "I need Christ. I can find Christ in His Church. I will unite myself to Christ in His Church now."



R. J. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

Americans

in

Rome



The lure
of the
eternal city
illustrated.

VINCE McALOON, from Pawtucket, R. I., is the genial secretary and host of the Notre Dame Alumni Club in Rome, located just a block away from the great basilica of St. Mary Major. Seeing him there one day not long ago (even a synthetic N. D. grad like myself finds a welcome in his establishment), and knowing he had been at his Roman post for 15 years, some questions came into my mind.

How many Americans are there in Rome? Where are they to be found? Why do they stay there?

Almost immediately I came up against a fact that astounded me. Vince is only one of some 7000 permanent American residents in the

eternal city, including several thousand who are not of the Roman Catholic faith. The American Catholics are to be found in what at first sight seem to be unexpected places: Among the cardinals in Curia, among the judges of the Sacred Roman Rota, among the canons chanting the office in the great Roman basilicas; among the "penitentiaries" or confessors of St. Peter's, with their long fishpole-like rod, touching the penitents who kneel before them on the pavement; among the heads of great religious orders of men and women.

In other walks of Roman life besides the religious, Americans are also to be found in considerable number. Aside from the seminarians, the

monks, the brothers, the sisters (of whom more in a moment), you will find Americans in Rome (if you are a zealous researcher) as professors, students, artists, actors, night club operators and entertainers, diplomats, newspaper men and women, hotel and restaurant managers, office workers, technicians and other workers in the film industry.

Of course we should note the fact that Americans are by no means the only foreigners in Rome. There are other national groups much more closely knit into "colonies," as they are called: the French colony, the Spanish colony, also the English or the Irish colony. The Americans by and large seem more loosely connected, each one pretty much on his own.

But there still remains the surprising fact that there are seven thousand of them. As far as the lay people are concerned, most of them are connected with the American Embassy and Consulate, in its ornate (not to say magnificent) quarters on the Via Vittorio Veneto: the huge building was formerly the palace of the Queen Mother of the House of Savoy. Others work for tourist agencies, air lines, insurance companies, or business firms with branches in Rome. Some are at *Cinecitta*, the Hollywood of Rome, and said to be more ample in its staging area than any studio in Hollywood.

Besides, there are students taking courses at Roman universities or schools or at the American Academy in the city. For instance, there are

about 95 young Americans studying medicine in Rome, and a corresponding number in other disciplines.

OTHER Americans live in Rome as artists; the world's greatest treasures of art are to be found in the eternal city. Still others just like the atmosphere or the climate; and it must be said that Rome does afford a mild and sunny climate scarcely excelled in all the world.

Then there are teachers at the American schools for children. Notre Dame International School, for example, is a grammar and high school conducted (in English) by the brothers of the Holy Cross from Notre Dame, Indiana. The idea is to prepare boys for entrance into American universities. Although it is an American school, the 300 boys in attendance are from about 40 different nationalities; about 200 of them are Catholics. The Marymount sisters have a similar school for the lower grades.

Notre Dame International and Marymount, and also the newly opened St. Francis International School, are under Catholic auspices. But there are also two other schools for children: the Overseas School of Rome, serving 600 boys and girls, kindergarten through high school; and the Parioli International Day School with 200 boys and girls in the grades.

There is even a daily paper in English: the *Daily American*, with a circulation of about 25,000 and serving the entire Mediterranean region. It is the only English language daily news-

paper in Rome, and very popular generally; one sees it for sale at all the newsstands and advertised far and wide on walls and signposts.

Among the restaurants, special mention might be made of *Scoglio di Frisio*, right across Via Merulana from Sant' Alfonso, and around the corner from Vince McAloon's Notre Dame Club. It is an authentic Italian restaurant, but caters especially to the English-speaking clergy: British, Irish, American. Many an American young priest new ordained (as also the Irish and the British and the Scotch) has his festive banquet there with his parents come from afar for the glorious occasion. On Thanksgiving day you can get, at *Scoglio di Frisio*, a Thanksgiving dinner of turkey with all the trimmin's. And on St. Patrick's day you never saw the likes of the green streamers and shamrocks all over the place.

Rome also possesses an "American Men's Club of Rome," and an "American Women's Club of Rome," each with several hundred members. There is even the "American Chamber of Commerce" which meets regularly for mutual business interests. Strangest of all, a branch of the American Legion has Italian headquarters in Rome for 5000 Italian members. Of these, 4500 are veterans of World War I; and they come faithfully from near and far, down out of the mountains as well as from towns and hamlets, to attend the annual conventions.

As regards Catholics especially, American Aloysius Cardinal Muench, formerly bishop of Fargo, North Da-

kota, and later Apostolic Delegate to Germany, is now a "Cardinal in Curia." Two of the judges of the Roman Rota are Americans: Monsignor Francis Brennan and Monsignor William Doheney, C.S.C.; and Monsignor Brennan is the dean or "Supreme Justice," of this august tribunal. Others are officials in the various Roman congregations or departments of the Church's government. A number are professors at various Roman universities and schools. Monsignor Ligutti of Des Moines is the Church's contact man with the FAO, the Food and Agricultural Organization, connected with the United Nations Organization, which has its tremendous headquarters building in Rome.

The Superiors General of a number of religious orders of men are Americans: for instance, of the Capuchins, the Passionists, the Redemptorists, the Holy Cross Fathers, the Stigmatines, the Conventual Franciscans, the Precious Blood Fathers. So too the Mothers General of the Salvatorian Sisters and the Notre Dame Sisters.

The Salvatorian Sisters, under their dynamic American Superior General, Mother Olympia, have erected the outstanding general hospital in Rome, *Salvator Mundi* on the Janiculum Hill. The Irish "Blue Nuns" have another excellent hospital, with American sisters on the staff, and much patronized by Americans.

Motherhouses of orders of religious men, priests or brothers, number about 150 in Rome; those of sisters

run to several hundred (it is said that convents of nuns in Rome are in excess of six hundred!). Orders which do not actually have their motherhouse in Rome will often have a kind of hospice or business office. In a great many of them American nuns are in residence.

Then regarding seminarians: the various religious orders often have some kind of school or novitiate or *tirocinium* for their young people. There are about fifty such "religious seminaries" among the orders of men, with more than a sprinkling of Americans in them.

At the famous Beda College for belated vocations, for instance, there are some half dozen from the States; at the Capranica College, which is a kind of "select" seminary, about the same. At the Redemptorist Academy for advanced studies in moral theology, several Americans are always in residence.

THE North American College is of course the best known to Americans of the Roman seminaries. But in reality it is only one of some twenty-five such national seminaries: English College, Scotch College, Irish College, and the rest. In fact, it is not strictly even just "the American College." In Rome one learns rather promptly that there are other sections of the American continent besides the United States. Thus, among the national colleges, there is also the *Pio Latino Americano*. And the complete and proper title for our college is *Collegio Americano del Nord*. That is what it is often called in

familiar conversation: "The del Nord."

Students at the "del Nord" number about 270. They are all in the theology course, none in philosophy. They take all their classes at the Jesuit Gregorian University — except for a few lessons at home in Italian, chant, homiletics, and pastoral. The staff of Superiors, headed by Archbishop Martin O'Connor, counts seven priests.

This is the new "del Nord," opened in 1953. The old one, "The House on Humility Street," is now being used as a residence for American priests doing graduate work at the Roman Universities. About 75 of these postgraduate men live there: "Casa Santa Maria dell Umilta" is its official name.

One might be tempted to wonder on reading of all these priests in one town: "But what do they *do*? Is there any really priestly work for them at all?" The answer is that very many of the foreign priests resident in Rome, American and of other nationalities, do go out on Sundays to help in the parishes of Rome or its suburbs. For there is a surprising shortage of parish priests in Rome. This is due in good part to the rapid growth of the city.

In 1930 the population was about a million; there were 64 parishes. In 1961, the population is more than two million; there are 195 parishes. Of these, 3 parishes have each about 45,000 souls; 12 have 35,000; 26 have 25,000; 38 have 15,000 to 20,000 parishioners. More than half of the existing parishes are in charge

of religious orders; in the secular parishes, where there may be a pastor and one or two assistants for 20,000 souls, the priests who are foreigners in Rome — religious, professors, students — lend a hand as best they can with the Masses and confessions.

Besides the seminarians, there are other similar students: teaching brothers and sisters, especially at their two special schools: *Jesus Magister* for the brothers, and *Regina Mundi* for the sisters, where more than 30 orders are represented in the English courses. They are both schools of theology, with regular courses in philosophy, Scripture, dogmatic and moral theology and allied subjects.

Americans in Rome have their own parish church: Santa Susanna, in charge of the Paulist Fathers, under Rev. James F. Cunningham, C.S.P., its hardworking, "all things to all men" pastor. It numbers between 270 and 300 families in a very well-organized parish. It is also a kind of port of call for many visitors to Rome from the United States, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. They come to Father Cunningham looking for information, seeking help or guidance or tickets to papal audi-

ences, or simply for the sake of finding "a home away from home." Santa Susanna's is also the titular church of Cardinal Cushing of Boston.

Americans are not the only foreigners who for one reason or another have made a permanent residence in Rome, nor the only foreigners to occupy distinguished positions there. In the providence of God through the centuries, most Romans in the Roman church have been non-Romans. It began with St. Peter himself. As the foreign American stumbles through his Italian sentences, he finds some consolation in recalling that St. Peter must have talked Latin with a heavy Galilean accent; and that most of the popes themselves have been non-Romans. Pope Pius XII, born and bred in the city, was one of the rare exceptions. And he reflects that it must be God's will to have it so, as a way of showing that His Church belongs to no one nationality, not even the Romans, but that He Himself is still its guiding Spirit, working through "all nations and tribes and tongues" the eternal miracle of the unity and catholicity of His Mystical Body, right here in the eternal city itself.





Thoughts for the Shut-in

Our Lady's Christmas

Leonard F. Hyland, C.S.S.R.

IT WOULD help shut-ins considerably to bear their lot with patience if they would frequently ponder the truth that physical pain and incapacity are not the only forms of suffering in the world. Especially at Christmas time, this lesson should come home to them as they think of the kind of suffering that God permitted His own Mother to endure.

Mary was not physically ill; indeed she was not even asked to experience the ordinary pangs of childbirth in giving birth to her divine Son. But there were many other causes of sorrow thrust upon her, and so great was her understanding of the fruitfulness of pain that they never for a moment destroyed or weakened her cheerfulness and peace.

She bore her Son without pain, and that was easy; but she bore Him in a stable and laid Him in a manger, and that was inconceivably hard. With normal maternal instincts, she must have dreamed of a warm home, of a clean bed, of nice clothes for her Baby; but only the reeking stable and the steaming straw and the sweat-worn bands were hers to give the Child. All the shut-in's discomforts seem slight com-

pared to the sorrow of Mary; yet Mary accepted her lot with peace and with joy.

She longed, as only a mother can long, for the safety and security of her Child. Yet shortly after His birth she was awakened from sleep to hear the fateful message that the soldiers of Herod were abroad in the night seeking her Child to destroy Him. She was strong and healthy indeed; but what must have been the trembling fear with which she took Him from His cradle and clutched Him to her bosom and ran through the night — far, far away not only from the danger, but from all that she held dear. The shut-in may feel lonely at times, but what a lonely night it was for Mary when she crossed the borders of Egypt and settled among strangers in a strange land.

So in every incident of the life of Mary, there is a lesson of strength and encouragement for the shut-in. No, physical pain is not the worst form of suffering. There are keener swords for the healthy and heavier burdens for them whose bodies are whole and strong. But whatever the suffering God permits, it has a purpose; and as Mary's sorrows partook in the work of redemption, so can the sufferings of every shut-in in the world today.

YOU ARE A BOOK!

Be careful how you live. You may be the only book on Christianity that some people will ever read.

EVERYBODY'S

BAMBINO



Vignette of a
delightful Christmas
custom in Italy

CHRISTMAS is especially for children. Not because Santa Claus is coming loaded down with dolls, bikes, trains, and other toys, but because it is Christ's birthday. Children are automatically drawn to one another. They love each other. And above all, they love the Infant Jesus. Most of all do they love a birthday party for Him.

The biggest birthday party in the whole world is held for the Infant. It starts on Christmas morning and continues until January 6, the feast of the Three Kings. This party is quite different from the usual idea of parties. There is no ice cream and cake, but still the little children love it. Why? Because they take an active part in it.

The celebration takes place in one of the oldest churches in Rome. *Santa Maria Ara Coeli*, St. Mary of the Altar of Heaven, crowns the center on the highest of Rome's seven

hills. During the Christmas season special attention is focussed on this particular church. It becomes a church for the children.

The reason this church is picked by the children and their parents for the Christmas celebration is because of a lovely image of the Christ Child. Made of olive wood from the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, the statue of the Infant was brought to Rome during the sixteenth century. The early history of the statue is obscure and the documentary evidence is meager. But the Romans, young and old, fell in love with the image. It soon became famous for miracles and gained a high place in their piety. To show their appreciation, the Romans showered it with marks of homage, precious votive offerings of diamonds and other priceless stones. Then in 1897 it was crowned with a jewel-studded crown.

The statue is not only well known and loved in Rome, but throughout the entire world. Each day many letters come to Rome's post office with an address of only two words: *Bambino* and *Roma*. This does not pose any problem for the postman. He ties up the several letters in a bundle and drops them in his mailbag to be delivered on his route. When he gets to the church *Santa Maria Ara Coeli*, a Franciscan friar takes the letters and places them immediately on the altar in a side chapel where the statue is. There, in a glass case, the two foot statue of the Infant, covered with the votive jewels, looks down on the letters. At Christmas time the mail for the Bambino is much heavier. Every couple of days the altar has to be cleared off to make room for more recent correspondence. No one opens all of this mail. However, the Christ-child knows their contents, and many claim that their Christmas requests are promptly answered.

FOR weeks the children are excited about Christmas. Their dreams are filled with joy and excitement. With great anxiety they practice and prepare for their part in the birthday party for the Babe. The mothers are kept busy making new clothes for their little angels. For each mother wants her little cherub to look the best!

Soon the day comes. Christmas! On the top of the one hundred and twenty-four marble steps leading up to the church are shepherds from the rolling hills outside of Rome. The cold, damp, wind whistles around the corners. But they don't seem to no-

tice it so much now. The circumstances are different than in the fields. The love in their heart glows like the love of the shepherds on that starry night in Bethlehem so long ago. There in the golden light of the church the shepherds joyfully play their pipes.

Soon a hush falls over the crowd. Shyly a small shepherd boy comes forward. With his mellow soprano voice he sings the favorite Christmas carol: *Tu Scendi della Stella*. This beautiful hymn, written by St. Alphonsus, retells the story of the first Christmas. Tears of joy fill the eyes of the people as they stand there and listen to the youthful voice filling the air.

To climb the long flight of stairs would be quite a chore for the little ones. Their chubby legs are so short, and the steps are so big! So for protection, lest they fall and dirty their beautiful clothes, their parents take them in their arms and carry them.

After the third Mass on Christmas morning the party begins. The Infant is carried from the side chapel and placed in a life-sized crib in the church. The crib! The center of the children's attention.

IN front of the Nativity scene a small platform is placed where it remains until the Infant's birthday party is over. The little children mount the platform one at a time and "preach" to the crowds. What a wonderful occasion for them! Some break out with a grand beginning. Suddenly they forget the next word. They are unable to go on. Others develop stage

fright and then it is poor mamma who is in tears. A little tot may climb bravely on the platform, but then suddenly break into woeful sobs. No matter what they do, the people love them. It's the children's "big day." More children come. More songs. More "sermons." This goes on for two weeks and the people never tire of hearing the silver-pitched voices of the little ones.

A long Christmas party and one which all the people can attend as well as the children. Soon it comes to an end. The platform is removed. The Infant's statue is put back in the side chapel. However, this does not mean He is forgotten until the next Christmas. No. Each and every day of the year He receives visitors from all over the globe. Some cannot come to see Him, so He goes to see them.

When some little old lady with her crown of silver hair and bent from years of hard work, knows her life is drawing to a close, she wants the Infant. When a young expectant mother, unable to climb the endless row of stairs knows her hour is at hand, she wants the Infant. And so the re-

quest is sent to the father to bring the Bambino to bless them at their home. It is an age-old custom. The people along the way see the Bambino's carriage coming and they shout out: *Viva il Bambino Gesu!* "Long live the Infant Jesus!" The children run ahead and strew lovely flowers in His path while the older people bow with loving admiration. They know that many miracles have taken place when the Bambino visits, and perhaps there may be one today. The children are not the only ones who love the Infant. Everyone does. The young and old; the rich and the poor.

While this birthday party and other signs of affection are going on for the Infant, there is one who remains silent. Silent as she was so many years ago when the shepherds came to greet the little Babe. Silent when the kings from the Orient with their gifts came to pay homage. Yes, silent but ever present. But she doesn't mind. In fact, Mary loves to see all the people making a "fuss" over the Bambino. It is her Baby. And once again she gives Him to us!

ANGELS IN THE BIBLE

After all, there is no need to string out finespun arguments to prove that angels exist. Enough for us to know that God told us that there are angels. God tells us about the angels again and again in the pages of the Bible, and the Bible is God's word to us. At the entrance of the Garden of Eden an angel stood guard with a red-hot sword. When Abraham's arm was raised to sacrifice his son, the angel's arm was stronger. Tobias was guided to fortune and marriage by an angel. The Blessed Virgin spoke with an angel; Joseph was warned by an angel and our Lord accepted the services of angels after His fast of forty days and nights and during His agony in the garden.

Next U. S. Saint?

OVER four million Catholic children who are currently attending parochial grade schools in the United States, and the 42 million Catholics who support the Catholic school system, have special reason for rejoicing in this year, 1961, which is just drawing to a close. We are celebrating an unusual anniversary; 150 years ago the founder, promoter and pioneer builder of this gigantic and unique educational system was born. His name was John Nepomucene Neumann.

His birthplace was Bohemia, and the date was March 28, 1811. As a young man he came to the young United States. Soon he was a priest, and then a member of the Redemptorist congregation of missionaries. In 1852, to his humble dismay, he was named fourth bishop of Philadelphia. There he labored for eight intensely active years, and died at the early age of 49 in 1860. His cause for beatification is under serious consideration in Rome.

As we hope to indicate in this article, this 150th anniversary of his birth is well worth commemorating by American Catholics, for whom in so many ways he was a pioneer, giv-

A thumbnail sketch of one whose life typifies in a special way the energetic vigor of Catholics in America.

ing modern, practical expression to the faith.

John Neumann is not to be confused with John Cardinal Newman, the great British writer and thinker who was his contemporary. Newman was typically English in his outlook, as he himself readily confessed, even though the broad sweep of his thought ranged over the problems of the universal Church. Neumann, however, (pronounced the same way as Newman) typified the distinctive American approach to the faith and its practice.

In his life he combined in a remarkable way the cross currents of thought and feeling which were to be found in the various nationalities among the immigrants to America. If the Church has flourished here, it is because she has succeeded in as-

simulating these various racial strains and uniting them in a closely knit religious body. Although Neumann was himself a European by birth, he came to the United States as part of the great nineteenth century wave of immigration. He was proud to be an American, and wholeheartedly he adopted American ways. With single-minded devotion he worked as a priest to encourage his fellow immigrants to forget national differences and concentrate on being good, strong Catholics. If this was achieved, he felt rightly that they could not help being good strong Americans as well. The methods he used to achieve this desired result still are in use and retain their validity today.

NEUMANN was a recognized scholar, singled out as "one of the most learned bishops in the United States." Yet throughout his life he was most at home with the poor and the lowly. In this he imitated closely St. Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists, who abandoned fashionable Naples to preach to the mountain goatherds of his native Italy. For some years he labored as a humble, backwoods missionary in the Niagara Falls area, then in process of development, with scattered communities and rugged conditions of life.

He had a deep conviction of the universal mission of the Church to save all men. To equip himself as a useful instrument of God's saving Word, he learned eight languages, and spoke all of them well enough for ordinary pastoral use. A Bohemian by birth, he was fluent in the

Slav tongues, yet worked primarily among the German speaking immigrants. He founded the first parish for Italians in the United States, and addressed them fluently in their own tongue. Among French and Spanish speaking people he was equally at home. He became a great father and guide to those Irish immigrants who came from sections of Ireland where only Gaelic was spoken. In six months of study he learned this language well enough to hear confessions and offer them counsel in their problems.

FOR all his great talents of mind, Neumann's self-expressed desire was "to lose himself for God in the wilderness of America." In difficult, apostolic work he felt most at home, although he accepted with simple obedience the administrative tasks given to him in his community, and labored successfully as religious superior and vice-provincial.

There were some who did not think too highly of his administrative talents. Yet in eight short years as bishop of Philadelphia he built 89 churches, including a cathedral, and a number of schools and orphanages, together with a seminary for the training of future priests. If, as was said, he was ill at ease and awkward in a drawing room, surely this fault (if it be a fault) was swallowed up in his tremendous zeal for the advancement of God's cause in the vast area under his jurisdiction.

Bishop Neumann died while on an errand of zeal, making his way on foot through the streets of Philadel-

phia. Under the impact of a stroke, the little bishop crumpled unobtrusively to the ground. Borne into a nearby house, in a few moments he was dead.

But death could celebrate no victory over him. Almost immediately he was acclaimed a potential saint. In 1921 he was declared "venerable," the first title given by the Church to persons who have attained heroic virtue. If beatified and eventually brought to our altars as "saint," Bishop John Neumann will be the first male citizen, the first diocesan priest, the first religious, and the first United

States bishop so acclaimed. This honor may well be in store for the humble Redemptorist, whose Catholic cosmopolitanism and pioneer work in the building of Catholic schools must surely mark him out as a giant in the unfolding of church history in this land.

(Interested readers can learn more about Bishop Neumann in a 50c paperback entitled *Venerable Bishop John Neumann, Spiritual Architect for Millions*. The book may be ordered from Liguorian Pamphlets, Liguori, Missouri.)

THE GIFT OF THE KINGS

In Spain it is the custom for children at Christmas time to put their shoes on the sill outside the bedroom window in the hope that the Three Kings of the Orient on their annual journey to Bethlehem may stop and fill the little shoes with gifts.

The mother of Alfonso XIII was a truly Christian woman, and she seized upon this opportunity to teach her little son a lesson in charity.

When the boy Alfonso hurried to look at his shoes on Christmas morning, he found this note:

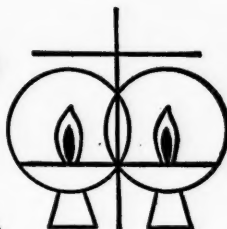
"To our beloved confrere, His Most Catholic Majesty, King of Spain:

"You are expecting a present, a very fine, beautiful and splendid one, such as kings give to one another. But we have brought you no present, on purpose, because we want you to have a little disappointment this time. A king should learn what disappointment means, because he has sometimes to cause disappointment to others, and to make them do what they do not wish to do. He must know how it feels to have that happen to others by having sometimes felt it himself.

"When you are a man and have everything you want, you must never forget that there are many people in the world who have nothing at all; you must notice these sad and disagreeable things so as to prevent them whenever you can. Remember that there are a great many children who are always disappointed. They want our toys very much. But such children cannot have any presents from the Wise Men. They would have to put their shoes outside the windows of their rooms, but they haven't any rooms, any windows, or any shoes.

Your kingly confreres,
Balthasar, Kaspar and Melchior."

FOR WIVES AND HUSBANDS ONLY



Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

For Children of Invalidly Married Parents

PROBLEM: About 45 years ago, my father was divorced, and later on, in another city, went through a civil marriage ceremony with my mother. His first wife is still living. Both had been Catholics; they brought us (their three children) up in a Catholic atmosphere, sent us to parochial schools at great sacrifice during the depression years, supervised our daily prayers, attended Mass, observed the fasts, etc. I often wonder why and how this marriage took place. We never discuss it with our parents. Perhaps a pregnancy made my mother feel she had to marry. To whom could she turn? All we know is that our parents' life has been exemplary and that they have been wonderful to us. Yet we know they are living in an invalid marriage. Occasionally a little phrase will slip from their lips which indicates they are concerned about dying and being buried outside the Church. I once spoke to a priest about it, and he told me it is our duty to try to get them to separate. Since they are in fair health, financially independent, proud that they need help from no one, and since nobody in the neighborhood knows of their past, a separation would really be a scandal. I could not possibly suggest it. All I do

is love them, trust in God's goodness and mercy, and pray for them, especially that they may die in the state of grace. Is my attitude right?

SOLUTION: It would seem from the circumstances presented here that the parents are up in years and the children all grown to maturity. There is the added circumstance that the invalidity of the parents' marriage seems to be completely unknown to their friends and the people of the community and parish. In a set of circumstances such as these, separation as a means of permitting the parents to receive the sacraments does not necessarily require that they leave each other and live in separate dwellings. Under the authority of the bishop, they can be permitted to live in the same house, but "as brother and sister," that is, with a tested and permanent renunciation of the use of the conjugal right that is virtuously exercised only by the lawfully married.

It is understandable that it is exceedingly difficult for sons and daughters, even though adults, to bring up a subject like this to their parents. Filial love and respect, and a natural shyness in respect to such intimate topics, will

always be a barrier. However, the gravity of the situation requires that at least indirect methods be used to bring to the attention of the parents what would be required of them as a condition for their receiving the sacraments and not dying outside the Church. And even natural shyness can be overcome if a son or daughter possesses a deep spiritual realization of what is at stake, and judges that there is some hope of helping the parents by speaking out directly.

Indirect efforts would include having some literature pertaining to this problem around and available to the parents; cultivating the friendship of a priest, and conferring with him on what might be done; speaking often of the comfort and spiritual joy that comes

from receiving the sacraments, so that the parents will begin to yearn to be able to share such joy, and therefore become willing to make any sacrifice required for this. Added to all this there should indeed be constant prayers, just as our correspondent states that these are being said.

We have no doubt that in the case presented here, there are many elements that make for hope. Parents who have done such an excellent job of raising their children probably think far more often than their children suspect of their need of the sacraments and God's grace. One never knows how small a prod may be needed to inspire them to do what God is asking of them.

RIGHT REJOICING

Beloved, since with undeniable love, the good God has given to us who are called to eternal life such riches—for we have not only the prophetic foretellings, but the Truth itself visible in the flesh to be our aid—we must not rejoice in a merely earthly way on this, the birthday of our Lord. Our celebration will be well and lovingly carried out if each one remembers of Whose Body he is a member, to what Head he is joined. Let the holy building show no broken jointing. Think, Beloved, think! Recall, with the help of the Holy Ghost Who it is that has taken us to Himself and Whom it is that we have received in us. The Lord Jesus became our flesh by His birth, we became His Body by our rebirth. Members of Christ, temples of the Holy Ghost, that is what we are! This is why the Apostle says: Glorify and bear God in your bodies. (I Cor. 6:20)

He has given us His own mercy and His own humility, those virtues in which He redeemed us, according to His own promise: Come to Me all you who labor and are heavily burdened and I will refresh you. Learn of Me for I am meek and humble of heart. (Matt. 11:28-9) Let us take on the yoke of His truth, which is not heavy nor rough. Let us be humble like Him to Whose glory we aspire. He is our helper, able to fulfill His promises, merciful to forgive our sins, powerful to bring us to Himself Who lives and reigns through all eternity, forever, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

*Christmas Sermon,
Pope St. Leo the Great*

**Eight centuries
before Christ a man
of genius foretold
His coming.**

advent's prophet

JOHN FITZPATRICK, C.S.S.R.

THREE saints perfectly embody the spirit of the Advent season. They are Isaias, St. John the Baptist, and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Mary, of course, is the central figure. These are the last weeks of waiting for the birth of her Child. One can only speculate with reverent awe what must have been the deep thoughts in her mind and the profound emotions welling up in her virginal heart as the time of her delivery drew near. For every true Christian, the spirit of Advent must express itself in the prayer to Mary: "Show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus."

St. John the Baptist also looms large in the Advent liturgy. It is true that the Gospels, after describing the circumstances of his birth, have nothing more to say of him until the day

when he emerges from the desert, gaunt and sun-blackened, to preach his gospel of penance. This happens shortly before Christ Himself takes up His own public life. Nevertheless St. John in his person and in his message points inevitably to the coming of the Saviour, whether in birth or public life. Repeatedly during the Advent the Church in her liturgy calls St. John to the center of the stage to warn and console:

"Bring forth fruits befitting repentance!" (Luke 3:8)

"All mankind shall see the salvation of God." (Luke 3:6)

But the third chief character of Advent is also worthy of special note. This is the prophet Isaias, who eight centuries before Christ clearly foretold His coming. St. John in fact identified his own mission with that of his venerable predecessor. When

the Jewish priests came from Jerusalem to the Jordan to question him, he said of himself, simply:

"I am the voice of one crying in the desert, 'make straight the way of the Lord,' as said Isaias the prophet." (John 1:23)

Who was Isaias, and what was his special significance?

One of the great prophets of the Jewish people, and a writer whose talents even in the natural order were in the order of genius, his very name is a signpost pointing down the centuries. Translated, Isaias means "salvation of the Lord."

The prophets were men sent by God to His chosen people at intervals during the long centuries before the coming of the Redeemer. Their purpose was to keep alive and to reinforce the knowledge and the worship of the one true God. Frequently the Jews would show signs of going over to the worship of idols, as was practiced in the neighboring nations around them. It was at such a time that a prophet would appear upon the scene, issuing stern warnings, or telling of the punishments which threatened a faithless people. But the prophets also brought encouragement to their hearers. Even though their nation was ringed around with enemies, these holy men assured the people that God loved them, and would not abandon them, if they remained faithful to Him.

But while the prophets were concerned first with their own people, often their prophetic vision, a special gift of God, would break through the barriers of time and fix itself on re-

mote events. These events they saw "in a glass, darkly," for it is the very nature of prophecy to view the future thus. But sometimes their view of the future redemption of the world was breathtaking in its clarity.

Isaias is especially noteworthy for this; in fact, his prophecy is sometimes referred to as the "fifth Gospel," so striking are his descriptions of the Saviour, and the circumstances of His coming into the world. More clearly than any other Old Testament prophet Isaias proclaims the promise of the New Law. In vivid, matchless language, he first distills the very essence of the world's longing for the Redeemer, and then rejoices lyrically as his vision sweeps him past the moment when the Redeemer actually appears upon the human scene.

It is no wonder then that the Church finds great solace in the writings of Isaias during the holy season of Advent, and asks the faithful to meditate upon them as an excellent means of preparing for Christmas.

IN the divine office at this season the ordinary Scriptural lessons are invariably drawn from the book of Isaias. Priests and religious, whose profession binds them to the saying of the Church's official prayer each day, as well as a growing number of lay people who recite the daily Office, have the opportunity to drink deeply at this ancient but ever new source of wisdom and beauty.

Here each year they encounter again the striking passage in Isaias, chapter 7, in which the prophet urges King Achaz to ask a sign of God's

favor. The king refuses to do this, and in that moment, it would seem, Isaias is rapt out of himself, and in the stubbornness of Achaz, finds an illustration of the selfishness and obtuseness of all the world in the face of God's promised miracle of redemption.

"Is it a small thing for you to be grievous to men, that you are grievous to my God also?

"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel."

In the period from December 17 to 24, special antiphons are set aside for Vespers. These are excerpts from the Scriptures meant to serve as focal points for meditation on the Advent mystery. This series of antiphons sometimes is referred to as "The Great O's," because each begins with that exclamation. Three of these are from Isaias:

"O root of Jesse, Who standest for an ensign of the people, before Whom kings shall keep silence, and unto Whom the Gentiles shall make their supplication: come to deliver us and tarry not." (Isaias 11:10)

"O Key of David and sceptre of the house of Israel, Who openest and no man shutteth, Who shuttest and no man openeth: come and bring forth from his prison house, the captive that sitteth in darkness and in the shadow of death." (Isaias 22:22, Apoc. 3:7, Luke 1:79)

"O Emmanuel, our king and law-giver, the expected of the nations and their Saviour, come to save us,

O Lord our God." (Isaias 7:14; 33:22)

In the Advent Masses the writings of Isaias are drawn upon increasingly as Christmas draws near.

"Say to the fainthearted, take courage and fear not: behold our God will come and will save us." (Isaias 35:4, third Sunday of Advent)

And the Office for the same day extends this beautiful passage:

"The land that was desolate and impassable shall be glad, and the wilderness shall rejoice, and shall flourish like the lily.

"It shall bud forth and blossom, and shall rejoice with joy and praise: the glory of Libanus is given to it: the beauty of Carmel and Saron, they shall see the glory of the Lord and the beauty of our God. . . .

"And the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and shall come into Sion with praise, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

The Introit of the Mass for the fourth Sunday again expresses through Isaias the longing of the world:

"Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour." (Isaias 45:8)

On the vigil of the feast, the Communion prayer reminds us:

"The glory of the Lord shall be revealed: and all flesh shall see the salvation of our God." (Isaias 40:5)

Then on Christmas day itself the triumphant shout goes forth in the

Introit of the second and third Masses:

"A light shall shine upon us this day: for the Lord is born to us: and He shall be called wonderful, God, the Prince of peace, the Father of the world to come, of whose reign there shall be no end." (Isaias 9:2-6)

"A child is born to us, and a Son

is given to us: whose government is upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called the angel of great counsel." (Isaias 9:6)

Reverent meditation on these beautiful passages must surely bring about those dispositions of heart which will make Christmas meaningful in the highest and best sense of the word.

THE CHRISTMAS ROSES

A legend that was popular in the Middle Ages relates the story of Madelon, a little shepherd maid, who accompanied the shepherds at Christmas to worship the newborn Babe.

The little girl, standing behind her companions, began to weep because she had no gift to offer the holy Child as He lay on His bed of straw.

Suddenly the angel Gabriel stood beside her and said:

"Little shepherdess, why do you weep?"

"Alas," she replied, "because I have no gift to offer to the Infant Jesus. If I could only give Him some roses, for He has not a single flower; but it is freezing, and spring is far away."

Then the angel took Madelon by the hand and leading her into a nearby field, he struck the ground with the tip of His wings. And behold! the ground was covered with countless fragrant flowers of every variety and hue.

With a cry of delight, the little girl gathered a bouquet of these beautiful flowers, and kneeling at the feet of the newborn King, joyfully offered Him her gift.

LIGUORIAN BINDERS

We have had hard-cover binders made to order for holding 12 copies of THE LIGUORIAN in a single volume. Anyone can insert the issues in the binder. Those who preserve their copies of THE LIGUORIAN for reference will find the binders very handy, with the index always at the end of the December issue. Order binders from THE LIGUORIAN, Liguori, Mo., at \$2.50 each.

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IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS

Please notify us promptly of your change of address, giving both your old and new address. It makes it easy for our office if you cut your stenciled address from the rear cover of one of your issues of THE LIGUORIAN and send it in when asking for a change of address. Notify us by the tenth of the month if your copy for that month has not been delivered.

readers retort



In which readers are invited to express their minds on articles and opinions published in *The Liguorian*. Letters must be signed and full address of the writer must be given, though city and name will be withheld from publication on request.

E for Effort

A correspondent in your September issue states that she would flip if she had more children. Well, I have had three children in three and a half years, and after our first was born, I literally flipped. I had to be hospitalized for a short time. Then after I got home, I almost went to pieces again. This was a frightening experience, and I am sure that it was only by prayers, and the grace of God, and the love and thoughtfulness of my husband and the doctor's efforts that I came to my senses. Naturally, I was worried when our other children came along, but thanks be to God I have been able to keep control of myself. I am highly nervous by nature, and each day brings situations which leave me literally shaking inside. But I do love our children, and I am trying to bring them up with all the love and patience I can muster. The love comes easy. The confidence and patience do not. I too would die before practicing contraception. And we have exercised self-control a great part of the time. I really think it is unfair that we should be accused of a gluttonous sex life. I honestly believe that if God allows the children to come (despite sincere efforts to make use of the rhythm) He will also give the grace and strength necessary to raise them properly. I can honestly say that for

me the rewards of having a new baby far outweigh the hardships and worries.
Anon.

Alternatives in Marriage

Having been married for 30 years, I am well aware of the problems of this vocation. I have nothing critical to say of those who are seeking light and understanding. I don't see, however, how these people who openly disagree with the teaching of the Church on contraception can call themselves good Catholics. What I would like to advocate is a more positive and spiritual approach to marriage; a choice between two alternatives, either of which is pleasing to God. One is a spontaneous, romantic, loving surrender of husband and wife to each other with uncalculating abandonment to God's will as to the consequences. This is a happy state, rich with blessings. The other way is continence, practiced periodically or permanently in accordance with the mutual desire of the couple. This is the way of the saints, and it can lead straight to heaven. Father Fulgence Meyer in his book, *Plain Talks on Marriage* quotes St. Augustine as saying: "The union of the spirits and minds in true friendship and love is much dearer and more satisfying than the union of the bodies." There are many among us who need encouragement in a holy

way of life. We have become too bold, too brazen, too indelicate in public appearances and in public speech. I believe that couples who need counsel in this delicate area should seek it privately.

Maryland

L. F.

Pen in Fist

I read everything from Chekhov to Alfred E. Newman, and my vote is for the LIGUORIAN as being consistently the best magazine on the market. It always seems to arrive when I am in need of being called up short. But you always do the calling with kindness. My pen's in my fist tonight at the Minnesota mother of three spouting self-control if rhythm doesn't work. My husband and I have been positive pillars of self-control, and we still have had eight children in fourteen years. The fact that they are marvelous children is here beside the point. I'm here to say the wanton bit is terribly hard to take from Catholics, much less Protestants. Those who use contraceptives and indulge themselves constantly look upon us with our sincere effort at spacing by self-control as sex maniacs. Irony of ironies! I cannot go around explaining my unreliable physical functionings to all and sundry. The smug Minnesota creature is one with far too many others, and excuse me if I allowed her to get my Irish up. Meekness is not my easiest virtue. God bless the LIGUORIAN as my constant solace and refurbishment!

Maryland

Anon.

Biblical Backing

Mrs. E. A. describes herself in the September Readers Retort as a non-Catholic with a scientific mind. She says she has not been able to find anything in the Bible touching on contra-

ception, and she would like to have the law stated in black and white. But if she read the Bible, how could she have missed these two instances: In Genesis, chapter 38, is told the story of Onan, who frustrated the sex act by "spilling the seed on the ground." For this "Onan was destroyed by the Lord." Again, for their lustfulness and "having pleasure with man" (homosexuality), the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were completely destroyed. These two examples are as "black and white" as can be found anywhere. They prove that *any* perversion in the use of sex is wrong and against God's law.

Illinois

J. G.

Sympathy with Dictators?

Between your derogatory remarks by insinuation on General Franco, and the pope's opinion reflected by his granting the Order of Christ to the "tyrant," I choose the latter. I refer to your Readers Ask column in the September LIGUORIAN. If it were not for the many thousands who fought and died for the same cause as Franco, you probably wouldn't be sitting comfortably putting together your magazine dedicated to Truth etc. It seems to me you have catered to popular Anglo-Saxon opinion. But truth doesn't depend on popularity, nor on the opinion of Anglo-Saxons. The truth is that Spain has more than once saved Christianity for the western world, and most recently under the Franco whom you belittle. I suggest that next time you moralize on the goodness of acquiring political power through the use of political machines installed with dad's money.

Puerto Rico

F. R.

• *We stand properly reprov'd. It remains true, however, that the Cardinal Primate of Spain recently found occasion to object strongly against some ex-*

treme manifestations of authoritarianism by the party in power in Spain.

The editors

Lack of Outspokenness

There are two types of Catholics who particularly annoy me. The one type is always throwing mud at the Church. The other is the Catholic who defends the Church 100% not only in doctrine but in practice. But this is unrealistic. Your defense of the Church on its attitude toward dictators and integration is misleading. Why has she condoned dictatorships like that of Batista in Cuba? When Castro started stepping on her toes, she condemned him quickly enough, but Batista was a full-blown dictator too, and did less for the poor people than Castro is trying to do. The Church and the United States have got to wake up to the fact that if they don't start looking out for the economic and social welfare of the people, the people will look elsewhere, yes, even toward Communism. Hungry and impoverished people are not very choosy. As to integration, for every outspoken foe of segregation like Cardinal Ritter, of St. Louis, there are many clergy with authority who have been silent on the subject, or have tried to ignore it. I hope with God's help to remain true to my Catholic faith, but I cannot blind myself to her weaknesses on the human side when they are apparent to all. For it is only by an honest and realistic appraisal of our faults that we can hope to win the respect of those outside the fold, who are only too inclined to look upon Catholics as complete yes-men.

Maryland

A. H.

• We must protest that as to the official position of the Church on the basic rights of every individual human being, this has been abundantly and repeatedly made clear. If this teaching

is not always put into complete practice by individuals in local areas, should we really be surprised at this demonstration of human weakness? Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.

The editors

Washing Held Up

I love the LIGUORIAN, but please oh please don't let another copy of mine arrive on Monday morning! I started to wash (there are ten in my family) then the mail came with my LIGUORIAN. I only intended to peek through it. Well, to make a long story short, it was late afternoon when I hung up my last load, which consisted of 129 socks, with 37 lacking mates. I was ready for some head banging among my eight small fry. Then I thought of some of those letters from mothers of really large families, and your comments, and decided I had no problem at all.

New Jersey

Anon.

The Curse of Cain

I am a convert and a Negro. I'd like to comment on the letter from J. A. S. in the September LIGUORIAN. He seemed to be struck with the similarity of Cain's condition after he killed Abel and the present state of the colored race. Even if it were true that Negroes are under the curse of Cain (and the LIGUORIAN has rightly tagged such an idea as nonsense), J. A. S. ought to read a little further in the Bible where it states that "whoever kills Cain shall be punished sevenfold." (Genesis 4:15) Maybe he ought to give up trying to find justification for his stand in the Bible.

Connecticut

J. H.

Confused Parents

Having enjoyed the LIGUORIAN for several years, I feel you are the

people to whom I can sound off a gripe. This letter may sound bitter, but I am fed up with all the criticism directed against parents. We are constantly being told how stupid we are by authorities who cannot agree amongst themselves. Pick up any two magazines or papers and you will find at least two if not more contradictory opinions, or at least a lot of advice that cannot possibly apply to all children. I know; I have ten children; no two are alike, but we are trying desperately to train them to be good Catholic Americans and eventually to go back to God. These writers blame parents for juvenile delinquency, but I wonder if parents aren't being so confused and made to feel inadequate that they don't know what to do. Take these contradictions for examples: Discipline the child; you are too lenient and are spoiling him. Don't discipline the child; you are too strict and giving the child complexes. Keep the child at home; don't let him roam the streets. Don't keep the child at home; you are being overprotective. These are only some examples. Then there is the fact that children read so often those articles that call parents stupid and irresponsible that it is a wonder they have any respect left. I cannot help but feel that when God gave us the graces of marriage and the blessing of children, He also gave us enough help and common sense to train them without being subjected to a constant battering of criticism. If you print any of this, please don't use my name.

Missouri

N. N.

• *We feel that it is good that the things in this letter have been said. There are a score of different philosophies about raising children in America, and about 10,000 "experts" who cannot agree among themselves because they have no basic common truths to build on.*

It is no wonder parents become confused. It must not be forgotten too that there are plenty of selfish parents who just don't care what happens to their children and won't make any sacrifices in their behalf. But surely good, sincere parents like the writer of the above can blithely throw into the ashcan much of the secularistic hokum about raising children that gets into print these days.

The editors

Who Can Plan Happiness?

I've been a subscriber to your wonderful magazine for at least four years. My employer had a copy. I read it and was so overwhelmed by your intelligent answers and articles that I started to subscribe right away. The articles that interest me most are the ones about mothers who want planned parenthood. These are the ones that gall me no end, for I am surrounded by them every day. I have been married five years and have four wonderful babies. Each day I am exposed to my young Catholic neighbors who have two planned children and have them planned so many years apart. The mothers plan to send them to a certain school, and they have already planned a profession for them. Plan! Plan! Plan! What makes anybody think you can plan happiness? Suppose God chooses to take away one of these planned children. Where will these mothers be then? These Catholic girls are not happy, though they profess to be. They are educated, yet they are ignorant. When they come to my house for coffee, they are going to talk about two things: their children or someone else's personal life. They aren't even able to cope with everyday conversation which surely ought to touch on modern medicine, for example, or the tragedies of Communism. These girls have much more time than I have — but look at them! Wearing slacks, hair

always in pin curls, not wearing even a trace of lipstick. They don't look in any way presentable, let alone feminine. They spend a good deal of time buying clothes and patronizing the beauty parlor. They say they just can't stand any more children — their nerves are shot! Right now their two-year-old is playing in the street. Why aren't they watching him? They'll scream and yell when he comes in dirty. They are able to sit at my table, drinking coffee and — talk, talk, talk! But they are not able to guide the hand of a little child. He hits his mother and talks back to her, and he's never been told it's wrong.

I tell you that I can't wait for the next baby and I hope it's twins — and don't let them try to call me a sexy Catholic. I tell you that I prefer a new baby to a new car. Yes, I prefer a new soul to any material thing in life. The houses of my neighbors are full of grand new furniture, but do they enjoy it? God help one of the little ones if he smudges the furniture with a hand print. They are putting their money into material wealth — inanimate objects which give you nothing in return, and in their old age the furniture will rot, their house will rot, their children will be married and perhaps living far away, and every one of these ladies may be a lonely old widow wondering what happened to her planned happiness. Then they'll probably be back at my house enjoying the laughter and togetherness of my fifteen grandchildren. They will be alone and have nothing, but hungry to share the wealth of a happy family, a family thankful to God for all that was bestowed on them, a family that was asked for, was prayed for and was welcomed above all things else. And you know something else? I look at least fifteen years younger than they do, because I am happy inside. I am so burned up about all this

birth control stuff, I just had to write this letter. I didn't know what to do with it, so I am mailing it to you, because I think you'll agree with me.

New York

Mrs. P. M. C.

Kind Words

At one time I received the LIGUORIAN on my own subscription, and I didn't like it. I thought the writers were too prim and prudish and wouldn't write the things they did if they had any real experience with life. Well, somebody evidently thought I needed the LIGUORIAN pretty badly, because some thoughtful person gave me a three-year subscription, and I have to admit it's been good for me. I feel as if I have suddenly awakened and discovered what being a Catholic really means — not only in thought, but also in action. I'm grateful. And your writers aren't prim and prudish — they're smart!

N. N.

M. G.

I want to thank you for letting me have the privilege of sending your wonderful magazine to so many of my friends. I wish I could tell you how many letters and phone calls I've received. They all say they did not know there was such a wonderful magazine printed, and that they are passing it on to other friends.

Beaumont, Tex.

S. S.

As a Catholic educated in the public schools I find your magazine a wonderful help in bringing my husband and myself closer to the Church. I am happy to say that three of my five small sons are now attending parochial school — so we may make the "ideal Catholic family" category yet!

San Jose, Calif.

M.M.

Are You

**Christmas proves God's
generosity to man. Here
are reflections on man's
generosity to God.**

Generous

with GOD?

ONE of the greatest temptations of our age, or almost any age for that matter, is to be satisfied with mediocrity. In every field, certainly, there are a few individuals who rise above it and do really great things. In the field of education there are brilliant minds who stand out as great molders of thought. Science has its geniuses who all but forget to eat in their passionate search for knowledge. Top level writers and artists are respected by all. But for success in any of these fields there is an inescapable price to be paid. The only road by which success can be attained is patient sacrifice, unceasing giving of oneself to the service of one's ideal.

And the spiritual life is no different. It is easy to daydream about the

exploits, the glorious dedication of the saints of God; and it is not foreign to us to envy, in a way, the incomparable ecstasy of happiness they are now enjoying for their few short years of sacrifice. But when it comes to imitating them, we suddenly lose our enthusiasm and are quite content to settle down to the comfortable pace of the "herd." As long as we are as good as the average, why worry? We are quick to remind ourselves of the evils of being odd or singular. We suddenly enthrone prudence on the highest pedestal of them all. Whatever we do let's be reasonable.

And to anyone who would criticize us we protest "I am living well enough to get to heaven. That's enough for me. I'll be satisfied if I just squeeze in the door." Saving our

souls is surely an immensely important item — the very purpose of our life on earth. But it is not always that simple. If we understand the tremendous issues at stake, we would never dare to let such half measures content us.

The fact is, there are some who will not get to heaven by the road of mediocrity. Because of particular circumstances they must be greatly generous or they will not make it at all.

UNLIMITED CHALLENGE

BUT even from the point of view of our own advantage, have we ever stopped to ask ourselves just what is involved? The sacrifice or effort of a moment can gain a reward that will continue to bathe our soul in indescribable bliss for all the endless ages of eternity. A generous fervent, saintly life accumulates merit beyond the wildest reaches of our imagination. But it is difficult to make ourselves realize that. Only a soul that has left this life can know the blighting tragedy of a life of mediocrity. An eternal tragedy!

Perhaps we can still feel satisfied with ourselves if we do just enough to get by, to get one foot inside heaven. But will God be satisfied? The God Who commanded "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, thy whole soul, thy whole mind."

Our Lord Himself issued the challenge to the generous hearted: "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent bear it away."

But how much violence do we ever really do to ourselves?

Oh, certainly, we can satisfy ourselves that we are "pretty good Joes." We don't do anything particularly bad. We are not like the rest of men, drunkards, murderers, thieves, adulterers (from whose lips have we heard that expression?). We do a number of things that everybody judges good, worthwhile, virtuous. So we are pleased with ourselves, and perhaps feel subconsciously that God should be satisfied with us also.

Still, we can well ask ourselves in how much of the good that we do we are really just following our natural bent, and are making no sacrifice at all. We act perhaps like children who willingly give away things they do not particularly care for, but cling tenaciously to the toy they really want. We can be so generous with God in the ways *we* want to be generous, but in the ways *He* wants suddenly we turn out to be ever so selfish.

A man happens to have a temperament inclined to great activity. He is a hard worker, very industrious, never stops a moment. He hears a great deal of praise directed his way because of this, and he likes what he hears. But then, perhaps, he spoils it by critically lordling it over those who walk at a slower pace. And he proves that he is simply following his own will even in the good that he does by his neglect of certain spiritual duties which do not yield him much natural satisfaction.

Mrs. X. says many rosaries a day. Piety comes easy to her. But not charity. In this area she indulges in all sorts of malicious gossip and holier-than-thou criticism of others.

But we can show lack of generosity in another way by smug, self-satisfied stagnation. We go to Mass on Sunday — "Never miss a Sunday" we proudly tell the new pastor. And we have never eaten a piece of meat on Friday in our whole life. We always say a few prayers every day, well, almost always, then we sit back and wait for someone to adjust the halo on our heads. There is still a measureless spiritual world to be conquered, but our eyes do not see it because they are blinded by the deceitful glare of our own vanity. Even in the sacrifices we do make, is it real generosity or is it perhaps a cover up — a sort of throwing the scraps to God so He will not keep insisting on claiming the whole? Human nature can be so devious. We can become satisfied with ourselves for so little. Here is the danger. Here is the potential tragedy.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

NOW all this talk about generosity, we admit, makes good soapbox oratory. But what about real life? Does flesh and blood ever put it into practice?

The answer is yes. Generosity can be found anywhere. We could start with the saints. Every single saint without exception carried generosity to the limits of the heroic, else sanctity would not be attained. Heroic conquest of self in practicing virtue is the common demoninator in every saintly life. And invariably the saint's external work reflects the same spirit.

Consider St. Alphonsus, the founder of the Redemptorist congregation. When he was struggling against

all odds to get his order started, and thought he had it on its feet, everything collapsed in ruins about him. The priests he had recruited left him. He was utterly crushed, and in later years said that this was the greatest sorrow of his life. Yet what did he do, throw up his hands and say: "Well I tried. No one can blame me for giving up?" No. To show his loyalty to His divine Master, and perhaps to force his own lagging feet to move, he knelt and *bound himself by vow* to continue the work, even though he might be left to fight on alone.

Certainly the saint gave a great example of generosity. But is there no greatness of heart among our Catholic people today? The question has only to be asked to reveal its foolishness. Dr. Tom Dooley, for example, sacrificed a thriving practice at home in order to spend his life among the neglected Vietnamese and Laotians. And it is no small thing to become a "papal volunteer," one of the latest examples of Catholic generosity. Men and women in this group sacrifice several years of their life to serve the Church in Latin America for no reward except the love of God. Or right here at home, some school teachers are sacrificing, for some years at least, the higher salaries of the public schools to teach in the Catholic schools which need competent teachers so critically.

Christ said He would sometimes demand as the price of loyalty to Himself the sacrifice of something as precious as the love of home and family. Thus it was with the people

of North Vietnam who in order to escape the Communists and remain free to practice their Catholic faith, packed upon their stooped shoulders as many of their earthly possessions as they could carry and then went, hundreds of thousands of them, into exile. God alone knows what they have suffered for their faith. And they are not alone in suffering thus in this twisted modern world.

But we do not need to go to the ends of the earth to find such sacrifices being made. The man or woman in the next block may be such a hero, though in a different way.

Here is a married couple who have learned the crushing news that it is absolutely forbidden them to have another child. Death to the mother would be the consequence. They could take the easy road followed by so many others for lesser reasons, the sinful road of artificial birth prevention. But they choose the law of God even at the price of complete continence.

Or who can measure the loneliness in the heart of one whose spouse departs and enters another marriage? There are only two choices: to salvage a little earthly happiness by a sinful second marriage, or be heroic and go through life alone. Or what of one who falls deeply in love with another person already validly married? These are difficult, heartbreaking decisions. But many are generous enough to make them rightly for God.

HEROISM IN THE ORDINARY

EVEN in the mere living of a good Christian life, great generosity can be called for.

An average Catholic decides that he will be average no longer. So he embarks on a judicially planned program of higher spirituality. He includes daily Mass and Holy Communion, the rosary, perhaps some spiritual reading which is so essential to keeping alive one's spiritual fervor; possibly some other spiritual exercises that can be made to fit into his life quite easily. All goes well for a while, and he is happy in his new found fervor. But the test is yet to come. Gradually the glamour wears off. The tingling sensation of sensible fervor disappears and now it becomes a case of dogged perseverance and loyalty to God. But he plods along doing the best in his power to please his God. He, too, is showing a great-souled generosity.

Here is a woman who is the victim of a long, bitter, and possibly, lifetime illness. Yet she bears it not in a spirit of grudging patience, as something that cannot be escaped so make the best of it, but rather as an apostle. She realizes that of all the ways of saving souls of unfortunate sinners there is hardly any that can surpass suffering. That was the one Christ Himself used. So she is willing to become a lightning rod in the parish, drawing off the avenging justice of God from sinners and bringing them pardon. Generous souls, and their name is legion.

But there is a field of generosity even for those who feel they have fallen so far that the world has written them off. The man, for example, who has brought untold misery upon himself and his family by grossly ex-

cessive drink. Now he would like to rise from his degradation, but he is tortured by a burning desire for drink. Yet he suffers and fights for self control like a Matt Talbot who rose from the depths of drunkenness to the heights of holiness.

The list of such examples could go on indefinitely.

The number of the generous hearted is indeed great, though still small in comparison to what it should be. But there is only one great motive that could serve to inspire and sustain such generosity and make it super-

natural, and that is love, love for God, the great common denominator of all the saints.

In the Mass of St. Josaphat, martyr, the offertory verse is made up of these words of Christ "Greater love than this no one has that one lay down his life for his friends." We ordinarily apply that to Christ's love for us. But we can and should turn it around and try to make it something of the standard of our love for Him. We are not martyrs, but the living of our lives presents us with opportunities of greatness that will be limited only by our own generosity.

FOURTEENTH CENTURY MEDICINE

Rules laid down by a British physician of 600 years ago, John Mirfield:

Dress soberly in black. Clean your fingernails before making a call.

Do not walk swiftly (which betokens lack of seriousness) or slowly (which is a sign of faint-heartedness).

Get all the information you can from the patient's messenger. Then when you arrive, you will surprise the patient by your knowledge of his condition.

Make sure the patient has had the last rites of the Church before you examine him. If not, and his case is hopeless, he will think you a bad doctor. After he has had the priest and you tell him he will recover, then he will account you a great doctor.

In taking the patient's pulse, allow for the fact that there is a general fear of physicians and that he may be disturbed at the thought of the fee you will charge him.

When asked how long a recovery will take, double the expectant period and it will be to your credit. If the patient asks why he recovered so quickly, tell him he was strong-hearted and strong-bodied—he will be delighted.

Do not make good friends of your patients. You will otherwise make it harder to extract a fee.

Prescribe twice as much medicine for a rich patient as for a poor one. This will flatter their sense of social position and do your reputation no harm.

If you find a patient dead on arrival, show no surprise. Tell the family that you knew from the account of his symptoms that he would not recover. Inquire as to the hour at which he died. All this will enhance your professional reputation.

Linacre Quarterly quoting Coffee Time

SIDEBLANCES

On Criticizing Catholic Parochial Schools

By the Bystander

MR. DONALD McDONALD, a columnist so highly regarded that his comments on matters of interest to Catholics are published in many weekly Catholic newspapers, has joined the ranks of the critics of the standards of education in Catholic parochial schools. Perhaps we should specify that he has joined the ranks of the *violent* critics (we are referring only to Catholic critics) of the Catholic school system. This distinction should be made because we believe that every thinking Catholic should in a sense be a critic (as we hold ourselves to be) of any shortcoming he finds in the Catholic school system. The violent critic, to our mind, is to be distinguished from the moderate critic by two features: first, he makes universal, or at least very widely applying, statements about the adverse conditions in Catholic parochial schools; second, he suggests, if he does not demand, that some very drastic action be taken in view of the situation as he sees it, such as closing all Catholic parochial schools, or cutting out two or three or four grades.

Before we make our own comments on parochial school problems, a word should be said in

defense of the "violent" critics. The public has heard from quite a number of them over the past few years. Usually they are men of high intelligence, advanced education, solid Catholic integrity, and extremely high ideals. Imperfection of any sort, especially in a matter so dear to their hearts as education, irks them. They are not apt to be found visiting a great many parochial schools, nor talking to simple pastors, school superintendents, Catholic mothers and fathers and teachers on the subject of conditions in the schools. Confronted with fairly dramatic evidence of inadequacy in some schools, supported by previous public statements of erudite intellectuals like themselves, they easily over-simplify and generalize. In doing so they serve a good purpose. They inspire soul-searching. They provoke correction of abuses where these may have flourished. They promote greater interest in an effort toward better standards of education wherever they are heard.

Having said this, we should like to draw attention to some factors in the problems of Catholic schools, apt to be overlooked by the violent critics, that offset the pessimism these latter too often

inspire. Usually the first thing to be criticized about Catholic parochial schools is that their classrooms are overcrowded. It must be granted that, in a considerable number of such schools, the charge is true. But the critic who suggests that Catholic classrooms be emptied because they are too full usually forgets these facts: 1) This condition is by no means universal. There are dioceses that adhere to a strict rule of never having more than fifty pupils in a classroom, no matter how many children have to be turned away. 2) This condition is looked upon as a temporary necessity in almost every school where it obtains. Those involved in tolerating it know that within a reasonable time either a new parish will be formed, with its own school relieving some of the burden of the mother parish, or more classrooms will be added to the overcrowded school. 3) This condition is not confined to Catholic schools. There are overcrowded classrooms in many public schools, with those in charge hoping that it will be temporary just as in the case of Catholic schools. 4) Many staunch Catholics, having read the encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Christian education, or heard it explained, hold the conviction that it is better to have their children suffer the drawbacks of temporarily overcrowded Catholic classrooms, than to have them subjected to a totally secular education. These good people put tremendous pressure on their priests and on Cath-

olic school authorities. We are by no means sure that those in authority who give in to the pressure are doing wrong.

One more consideration should be added. Children who have been trained to habits of discipline and obedience and industry and good conduct in their own homes suffer no fatal intellectual calamity by the fact that they have to get part of their education in what is called an overcrowded classroom. Neglected Children, undisciplined children, spoiled children, are hard to teach and hard to make behave in any classroom. Naturally, such children are better off in a small class, where the teacher can try to be a mother and father as well as a teacher. But we should not talk as if every child in an overcrowded classroom is a problem child, completely neglected at home.

A second object of blasts from the violent critic of Catholic parochial schools is the so-called substandard teacher. No one would be so foolish as to deny the fact that, in so vast a human undertaking as the staffing of thousands of parochial schools, teachers with varying degrees of training and effectiveness are bound to be found. One of the facts that the whole nation has to live with is that there is a shortage of good teachers, and now that the rapidly growing Catholic school system has to compete with public schools in hiring teachers, there

are bound to be some weak spots. But the weak spots are no reason for black pessimism. The picture is not so dark as the violent critics want to make it appear. For example, in the whole state of Pennsylvania, 41 per cent of all public school teachers do not have college degrees, but do have teaching permits that assure them a teaching job without further study until they want to retire. Against that, in the Catholic school system of the diocese of Pittsburgh, less than 30 per cent of the teachers do not have college degrees, and not one of this 30 per cent can be permanently certified as a teacher unless he (or she) gets a college degree. Similar comparative statistics could be produced for many other areas of the country.

IT IS rather strange that we so seldom hear the violent critics of substandard teachers in Catholic grade schools, talking about the poor teachers that have to be tolerated in the public schools. This is not merely a question of college degrees and previous training, though these are important and of great concern to Catholic authorities as the Pittsburgh figures show. But it is also a question of native ability to transmit knowledge, to build character, to handle children. Among thousands of teachers, there will always be degrees of excellence, mediocrity and ineffectiveness. To incite Catholic parents to take their children out of a Catholic school because of a mediocre

teacher, without telling them that their children might run into a worse than mediocre teacher in a public school, is a form of deceit. This is not to be taken as violent criticism of public school teachers by any means; it is simply realistic facing of a fact that does not disappear by being ignored.

One final point that worries many critics of the Catholic school system (though Donald McDonald does not mention this) is the tremendous financial burden that building and maintaining these schools involves. Here too, however, we think that an optimistic word should be said. There is an awakening awareness on the part of Catholics in many parts of the country that they really owe more of their income to the support of their parish plant than they have been accustomed to give. There is a goodly number of parishes in which the majority of the wage earners are tithing, giving ten per cent of their income to religion and charity, five per cent to their parish and five per cent to other good causes. Such parishes have little difficulty in financing their needs. The more this practice spreads, the less we shall be hearing about the unbearable financial burdens of building and staffing and maintaining top-notch Catholic schools. On top of this it is our private optimistic belief that some day, after many skirmishes and debates perhaps, some of the taxes that Catholics now pay for the upkeep of the

public schools will be returned to them in some form of aid for the parochial schools of their choice. There is a healthy growth of understanding among high-placed and average Americans that the Catholic school system is an important fixture in the American scene.

To Catholic parents, then, who may at times feel depressed and discouraged when they read or

hear violent criticism of their Catholic parochial schools, we say only this: There is no need for panic. There is no need for pessimism. There are improvements needed in the over-all picture of the Catholic school system, just as they are also needed in the public schools of America. Hold fast to your principles of education, even while you speak and pray and work for the improvement of your schools.

THROUGH A WINDOW

In a little church in the far south of Ireland, every window but one is made of painted glass. Through that single exception may be seen a beautiful view: a lake of deepest blue, studded with green islets and backed by range after range of purple hills. Under the window is the inscription: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork."

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Problems of Professional and Business People

The Lawfulness of Paying Extortion Money

PROBLEM: I have been working in the Post Office Department for thirteen years, and a year ago I passed the examination for the position of supervisor. But nothing has been said to me about my getting the promotion except definite hints that if I want to be promoted I must pay for it. I have to see some politicians, attend some dinners at \$25 or \$50 a plate and give about \$500 to "the party." I feel that I am qualified for the job, and the extra money I would take in (about \$1000 a year) would certainly help me to support my family of five children. Now, I am wondering whether I may in conscience pay the money and get the promotion. The possibility of getting the job without paying seems very remote.

SOLUTION: Our correspondent has brought out one of the most deplorable features of American life, the custom of extorting money from an aspirant to a political appointment or promotion, with the definite understanding that otherwise he will not obtain the desired position. Our correspondent seems to be one of the few persons who have qualms of conscience about paying the extortion money. Indeed, it would seem that even many of those who demand payment for jobs are not the least disturbed in conscience. They probably argue that the fact that this has become a common procedure in American political life

suffices to make it lawful. Of course, this is a very inadequate argument, as far as the law of God is concerned.

Let us consider the particular problem of our questioner. May he contribute a sum of money to "the party" or to some individual politician in order to obtain the promotion which he is seeking? In certain circumstances he may do so without moral fault. If he is sure that he is fully qualified for the post and is determined to give faithful, honest service, but at the same time knows that he will not get the promotion unless he pays a sum of money to political leaders, he may pay the money. In such a case he cooperates materially in the sin of the extortioners; but material cooperation toward the sin of another is allowed when there are sufficient reasons to justify it. In the present instance the fact that he is a worthy man who will otherwise not get the job affords sufficient justification. Of course, this does not mean that the politicians who are demanding the money are justified. They are guilty of a grave sin, because they are supposed to make appointments according to the merit of the applicants, without demanding any recompense except their salary. If they take extortion money they are obliged in justice to restore it.

The case is similar to that of a father whose son has been kidnapped, and has been told that the boy will not be returned unless the father pays the kid-

napper a large sum of money. The father commits no sin if he pays the ransom money, although the kidnapper has no right to the money and is bound in conscience to restore it.

I say that the man seeking the civil appointment is *permitted* to pay the money demanded by the politicians. It might be the more perfect course for him to refuse to pay, even though he will thus lose his chance of promotion. For in this way he might be doing something toward eliminating some of the bribery and the extortion that prevail in America today. We shall never be rid of dishonest politicians as long as the citizens are willing to pay them for appointments they are supposed to give to the most worthy aspirants without requiring any payment in return.

To the Catholics of the United States it is a sad thought that some of these

dishonest politicians, whose conduct puts them in the same category with robbers who break into a house and steal money and jewels, are members of the Catholic Church. Sadder still is the fact that some of these dishonest civil servants apparently believe they can keep up their unjust practices and yet remain good Catholics, even going to the sacraments regularly. They seem to think that they can be excused by the argument that "Everybody's doing it." Well, thank God, not everybody is doing it. There are still some good, honest persons in politics. But even if every person in public life were demanding extortion money, it would still be a sin against the seventh commandment of God.

Very Rev. Francis J. Connell,
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The Catholic University of America

THE CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD

Man, called as we have seen to a truly supernatural life, must live and act always in the world in which he finds himself. Bearing a wounded human nature—despoiled by the sin of Adam—each one of us strives toward goodness only in the reliance on God's help. The divine assistance is never lacking, there is always "grace abounding," but our willingness to work with it is often less than it should be.

It is never enough for us merely to write our names large in favor of the high ideals of the Christian life unless at the same time we are prepared to put them to work in the market place of our everyday living. The Golden Rule has to be made to shine in dark places, and the Sermon on the Mount must be heard in the valleys of commotion.

For us there is no division between a human life and a Christian life; there is only one life in Christ. His word and His way must guide every action of ours whether we are at study or at prayer, at home or abroad, in leisure or at labor; there is simply no part of our lives from which He can be excluded.

Cardinal Cushing
Lenten Pastoral, 1961

A GIRL'S SECRET

This is my problem!

ONE of my friends, a high school girl, has confided to me as a secret that she has become infatuated with a married man and is thinking of running away with him. Talking to her does not seem to do any good. Must I keep this secret, or would I be allowed to tell her parents?

What should I do?

Hugh J. O'Connell, C.S.S.R.

SOLUTION: The right to secrecy is one of the most fundamental, necessary and precious of human rights. Disregard for it may bring grave harm to individuals and society at large. The violation of secrecy can ruin the reputation of one's neighbor and frustrate his most important plans.

Moreover, if there were no obligation to observe secrecy, those in need of help or advice would often have no means of assistance without the danger of bringing greater evil on themselves. The sick, for example, would hesitate to seek medical care; those accused of crime would be afraid to reveal the truth to their lawyer; students would fear to confide in their teachers; subjects in their superiors; and those in doubt and trouble in their counselors.

The unjust revelation of a secret, therefore, is a grave sin if it causes serious harm to an individual or to the common good.

However, the right to secrecy is not absolute and unlimited. There are cases in which one who learns a secret is allowed, and may even be obliged, to reveal what he has learned. The causes

which excuse from secrecy and permit the revelation of a secret may be reduced to four classes: 1) the consent of the person to whom the secret belongs; 2) the publication of the secret from other sources; 3) the command of lawful authority; 4) the necessity of preventing harm.

The case presented falls under the last of these reasons. It is possible that your girl friend's story is the product of her own imagination. Although she is infatuated with this man, he may not feel any attraction for her, and have no intention in the world of running away with her. Girls have been known to make up stories like this.

On the other hand, it is possible that the story is true. Since the world began, there have been countless incidents of men taking advantage of the ignorance or innocence of young girls. That is why we have such laws as the Mann Act and the penalty for statutory rape.

If the story is true, the girl is threatened with a most grievous harm, although she is too young and inexperienced to realize this at the moment. The man has, no doubt, promised her

that he will divorce his wife and marry her. But almost surely she will end up alone, penniless and desperate in some strange city when he has tired of her.

Therefore, even though the matter was confided to you as a secret, you

have not only the right, but the duty to make known this situation to the girl's parents. The necessary steps can then be taken to prevent your friend from ruining her life, as so many other young girls before her have done.

THE CHURCH AND MATERIAL WELFARE

Oh, how far from the truth people are when they let themselves be turned around by ruinous doctrines and think that just because the Church attaches greater importance to spiritual concerns it has forgotten about the other trials that men are facing! No: she is a mother who understands her children and helps them, and adds her weight to every effort aimed at improving the conditions of their life, including the material conditions. She takes to heart the worries of laboring-men and makes her very own the concern felt by families when men are forced to stop working and the source of income begins to fail. She never stops urging the authorities, employers, and all those who can offer advice or exert influence to see to it that everyone is assured of a steady job, for this is the source of well-being for families and the source of good order in human society.

The Church takes the keenest interest in every undertaking that is aimed at reaching true and lasting social justice, and by reminding men that they have been redeemed by Christ and are all sons of the one same Father, she lays the unshakable foundations for that justice. She defends the dignity of manual labor and calls upon it to play a noble role in collaborating with the mind that is directing the enterprise. In this way, the Church is working tirelessly to restore to human relations a firmly-grounded harmony that will be a reflection of the peace of heaven.

John XXIII: The Pope Speaks

SIGNS AND SYMBOLS A monogram often seen on Catholic altars is the alpha-omega symbol, A-W.

A stylized monogram of the Greek letters alpha (α) and omega (ω) intertwined.

Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. In the Apocalypse, St. John reports these words of Christ: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end."

Occasionally also in church decoration you will see the word NIKΑ, meaning in Greek, victory, and with it perhaps a palm, standing for immortality.



The lay apostolate is
not a luxury of devotion;
it is a plain duty which
devolves upon each of
us according to his
ability. You may choose
a form of apostolate
according to your
aptitude and
circumstances — but
choose you must!

The Apostleship

of the Laity

FRANCIS A. BRUNNER, C.S.S.R.

DO WE fully appreciate the pentecostal significance of the sacraments of Christian initiation? We are truly gifted people — and the gift *par excellence* which comes to us from the Father through Christ is the Holy Spirit. In our baptism it is the Spirit of God Who comes to dwell in us and makes us His temple. It is the Spirit Who unites us to Christ and draws us to the Father. It is the Spirit Who fills us with grace, the Spirit of adoption by which we can cry out to God, "Abba, Father!" For through the living waters we became with Christ two in one Spirit.

Yes, we are truly gifted. Our minds are alight with the dazzling glow not only of intelligence but of holy wisdom. And our hearts — what is the fire that burns there? Is it only an enthusiastic willingness to do battle with the forces of ignorance, or is it not rather that love enkindled by the

Spirit which would change the face of the earth and transform all things in Christ? Our sevenfold gift is one of tremendous import whose value can be measured only by infinity.

But the gift involves obligations. Is it possible for a Catholic who has received truth and life not to want to share them with others? Is he not in a kind of anguish at the thought that there are others who have not received them? Is he not acutely conscious that he ought to be doing something about it? For by the pentecostal gift received at baptism we are commissioned to be apostles. For us, as for the original twelve, the charge rings out loud and clear: "Go out all over the world and preach the Gospel to the whole of creation." The Spirit we received bids us to recreate the world. "All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (I Cor. 3:23) The Spirit Who casts fire on the earth desires the world to be renewed, and we, indwelt by that Spirit, are to be His instruments in that renewal.

The Apostolate in Theory

THE apostolate is not a commission limited to priests and bishops. The layman, too, is a member of the holy people of God and shares in the divine calling, for that divine calling is not entirely something individual. Of old, God had chosen the people of Israel to be His own people (Deut. 7:6-7) and had promised them, through Moses: "You shall serve me as a kingdom of priests, a consecrated nation." (Exod. 19:6) When the Jews forfeited this privileged position, their place was taken by the new Israel among the nations, the Church of Christ. This, then, is the "holy people" to whom St. Peter addressed the jubilant words: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people whom God means to have for Himself; it is yours to proclaim the exploits of the God Who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (I Peter 2:9)

The Christian community plays a priestly role in the "true temple," the "new holy of holies" which is the risen body of the Son incarnate. It is within this Mystical Body that the layman, too, must exercise his function as apostle. The layman, as well as the bishop and the priest, is a member of that purchased people whom God has made into "a royal race of priests." (Apoc. 5:9)

The Layman Dedicated

IN AN eminent sense, then, the layman is dedicated, consecrated. The very word "layman" has overtones of consecration and divine election. His vocation to the Catholic

Church has snatched him up from sin and death to give him grace and life, in Christ our Lord. By his baptism he has been called, in a visible and tangible way, to share in the blessings and the duties of membership in the Church. He has been incorporated into Christ, the one Mediator between God and man Who brings God to the people and the people to God. That sacrament of incorporation consecrates the Christian to God's service; it advances Christ's work, and the work thus done is done in His name and with a commission from Him.

What greater warrant is needed for the apostolic mission of every Christian, be he ecclesiastic or layman? Priest and layman need each other and neither is able to fulfill his apostolic vocation without the complementary work of the other. Both are needed for the fashioning of the Mystical Body.

Engagement in the World

BUT what distinguishes the layman in his apostolic role is his engagement in the world. To be a layman does not imply some sort of opposition between the profane and the holy. Rather it indicates a man who occupies a dedicated and consecrated place in the midst of the world. Nor does being a layman mean being a passive Christian occupied wholly with worldly affairs devoid of religious significance. A layman is a member of the Mystical Body who exercises his ecclesiastical function in the secular sphere where he lives. He is in the world. That world is not just a sinful thing; it is

primarily a creation of God, but a creation debased by the sinfulness of man's beginnings. The layman's task consists in Christianizing this original environment. It is his encounter with the world that marks out both his state as a layman and his duty as a Christian.

The Apostolate in Practice

EVERY Christian, in his own place, must be a soldier, even if the weapons he employs be merely those of the mind. Every Christian, lay or cleric, is a man anointed. Like the high priests and kings and prophets of the Old Testament, he has been anointed with the Spirit, sealed with the sign of faith, and thus charged with the task of fulfilling in the world the functions of Christ the Priest, Christ the King, Christ the Prophet of the Most High.

Lay Priesthood

THE layman shares, first of all, Christ's priesthood. There is but one priesthood in the Church of the New Covenant, and that is the priesthood of Christ. A perfect priesthood, of which the priesthood of Aaron was but a shadow and figure, it was exercised by our Saviour throughout His earthly life and above all on Calvary; it has found its fulfillment and its full efficacy with the glorification of Christ, and now continues to be exercised on behalf of all the faithful. This priesthood must be defined in terms of sacrifice, Christ's sacrifice and that of Christians.

There is, then, first of all an inner priesthood of self-offering, the offering of a holy life. The apostolate de-

mands not only a militant man but a holy one. The apostle is primarily a man of God, not merely a propagandist. If he is to fight the global war for Christ, if he is to spread the kingdom of Christ, his first task is to sanctify himself, to achieve holiness of life, to make the sacrifice of self to the service of God.

But the spiritual sacrifice of self must be re-enforced and enveloped in the sacrifice of the altar. Christ is the victim as well as the priest of the New Covenant, and Christians, united as they are with Him as their Head, are joined with Him in the sacrifice of the Mass. Here they make their offering with and through Christ the Priest; here they make their offering with and through His earthly representative, the ordained priest. By that offering their offering of themselves takes on a new dimension as a share in public worship. By purifying their souls in a spirit of contrite humbleness and reproducing in themselves the image of the Crucified, they participate in the Mass not only as worshippers but as priestly victims. It is no accident of history that the liturgical revival was the first of the modern reform movements. The partnership of both sides of the altar rail is the necessary basis for its correlative in the field of action.

Royal Dignity

"TO restore all things in Christ" does not, however, consist only in prayers and self-sacrifice or even in offering the Mass, but in dedicating all creation to God's service. And who but man, the God-

appointed, God-anointed lord of creation, can make such a dedication?

The Christian shares Christ's royal dignity. Spiritual kingship involves in the first place that age-long theme, rule over self. St. Chrysostom says that man is a king by virtue of having overthrown his evil deeds and slain his sins. Then there is kingship over the world and the whole paradox of the Christian position in it: there is our engagement in the world in order to bring about, so far as we can, the reign of God in all the world and the subduing of all things to His Spirit. Through man for whom it was created, the material world and the temporal order become objects of redemption. The world is redeemed through man's redemption.

In our day the material world has come to occupy a place of worship. We find work deified and the pursuit of earthly pleasure become an idol. Not only in atheistic lands but in our own as well, the world of matter casts a spell over the minds and hearts of men. Is man, whom God made lord of the world, to be enslaved by that world? Not if man asserts his kingly dignity, not if the Christian exercises the prerogatives of his royalty. Labor and rest, activity and leisure for God, workday and Sunday — these are not irreconcilably opposed to each other. They look to each other as two poles in an ellipse striving for perfection until their entrance into the circle of everlasting life and rest.

In the creativeness of work man reveals himself as the mirror of God's continuing creative activity.

That is why man must sanctify his work. Of this, Sunday observance is a symbol. It decides whether work is worship of God or idolatry; whether the worker is an image of the Creator or merely the reflection of his own labor; whether his work is an oppressive burden or the sweet yoke of Christ; whether his toils remain under the curse pronounced against Adam or become a fruitful imitation of Christ.

Man is either the lord of creation—or this material world dominates him, captivates him, annihilates him. To achieve his full mastery over material things man must bend them to the service of his own destiny; they must be made a part of his own striving for salvation. But when man's work is joined with Christ's offering, when the Christian attacks the kingdom of this world in order to subject it to the kingdom of God, he no longer works under the primeval curse. His work becomes an earnest of future glory, because it becomes a service of God.

Prophetical Function

BUT of course it is among men especially that the apostolate is exercised. To be an apostle means chiefly to influence the minds and move the hearts of men. Indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the layman will live his faith; his will be a faith that is active and vital. "The faith that finds its expression in love is all that matters." (Gal. 5:6) The Christian is a prophet, seer; by baptism he is enlightened by the Light of the world. His very presence, then, will be a beacon in a world of darkness.

Over and above exerting this gentle pressure of his presence, the Christian must shape and form the world he contacts. His faith, if it is truly vital, must be productive. Faith cannot take refuge in inwardness and leave the sad, sick world to its own devices. The Christian must mine the inexhaustible riches of revelation and use them for the improvement of the sorry lives of his fellows. Through his relationship with other men, through his business, his politics, his instruction, his leadership, the Christian must see that all areas of life become structures in which a human and Christian life can thrive without being choked. At least where the faithful Christian is, there will be a sign of genuine Christlike willingness to love and serve. And each time love and service come alive, the redemption becomes active in the world.

The layman's work is to be Christ's witness in the world of social, economic and political activity. He is the sower of the good seed in the broad field of secular action. There he must be another Christ passing among men. "The Christian is another Christ" was said of the layman long before it was applied to the priest; and one of the essential methods of carrying out this obligation in his commitment to earthly civilization is through his efforts to create a better world.

Whether in his home or in the crowded square, in his domestic relationships or in public affairs, the lay apostle must, by word and example, help to steer the world heaven-

ward. He must work in the making of laws and the shaping of social institutions. He must be engaged day by day in promoting the welfare of society, developing his country's prosperity and bettering the lot of the poor. He must come to grips with error, whether in heresy or paganism; gently with the Protestant who disagrees with his Catholic beliefs and boldly with the Marxist who disagrees with all religion. He must fashion his own home with love and understanding; he must rule the market place with integrity; he must influence the world with faith and hope. Herald of the Gospel, he must pray and preach, as far as in him lies, "that the word of the Lord may run its course triumphantly." (I Thess. 3:1) He must be an apostle in his work and in his leisure, willing to witness to his faith by his living or even by his dying. He must be witness, confessor, martyr.

A Matter of Obligation

CHRISTIAN involvement in the turmoil of human history is not a question of choice but of fact. The need for Christian witness is equally a matter of fact. The lay apostolate is not a luxury of devotion or a work of supererogation; it is a plain duty which devolves upon each of us according to his ability. There are many Catholics who not only think they have no obligation to engage in apostolic labor but are even convinced that it is no business of theirs, that they ought not to meddle! Participation in the apostolate is not a matter of choice but of obligation. You may choose the form of

the apostolate according to your aptitude and circumstances, but choose you must.

Our Lord spoke a parable one day, a fearful parable. With lightning strokes he etched an unforgettable picture of the Christian's duty to make use of the wondrous gifts that are his. A man, he said, gave his servants certain talents. Afterward he demanded an accounting. Some had doubled their money and so were praised and rewarded; but there was one servant who had merely hidden his talent. Because of his unprofitableness he was cast out into exterior darkness.

The lesson is clear. You have had wonderful opportunities to make use of the supernatural and natural gifts the Creator gave you. Have you been wasting them? Have you buried your talent? Don't hide your riches. Be a true apostle. Carry the torch high. At your baptism you received a lighted candle; that symbol of your love and service you must keep burning bright before the eyes of men till you meet the Bridegroom when he comes to take you into the eternal feast of heaven. It is your duty "to proclaim the exploits of the God Who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

TALK ABOUT OUR TALENTS!

There is a false humility that can force us into a lie. The fact is that we all have certain talents and accomplishments, and perhaps once in every blue moon someone compliments us on our finer moments. It is not humility to stand there and tell your complimenting friend that he is a bald-faced fibber, and that you really cannot play the piano, just after you have flawlessly run through a Bach or Beethoven. Not that one might put it in such words; yet the point is evident: it is not humility to deny a God-given gift. Humility is ever truth.

The mother of Christ did not hide her great Gift when the Magi came to adore. She held Him high and let them stay on their knees. Can we imagine Mary deferring and simpering that she had not really borne the Desired of the nations? She was beautifully proud of her Gift, but she never forgot whence He came.

All of us can do something well; all of us have some talent, gift, accomplishment. Wear these gifts well. Don't hide them. You won't need them in eternity. Use them now. Use your abilities, and warmth, and love, and humor, and personality — everything. But don't ever forget where it all came from. Don't forget that your God loved you enough to trust you with them. Don't think you did it by yourself, or you will destroy the crown of God's love that is a perennial halo over and above each gift we have.

READERS



ASK

Fight or Die?

Louis G. Miller, C.S.S.R.

QUESTION: Some people say that nuclear war would be such a terrible thing and cause so much destruction and such a terrible loss of life that it would be better to submit to Communist rule than have recourse to this kind of war. Survival under Communism, they say, is better than no survival at all. What do you think?

ANSWER: It must be said that for those who reject the central Christian idea of survival of the soul after physical death, the conclusion stated above is inescapable. If life on this earth is the only life, then it is a good to be preserved at any cost. This is the thinking of Lord Bertrand Russell and a group of his followers in England. In published memorials they have stated their view that given a choice between nuclear war and submission to the Communists, they are firmly committed to the second alternative.

There are two key words which must be considered in the Christian answer to the problem as stated. The first is "submission." It should be clear that a convinced Christian can never in conscience deny his faith and accept in its place the philosophy of atheistic Communism. As Pius XI in his celebrated encyclical made clear, atheistic Communism is intrinsically wrong, since it is in opposition to both reason and divine revelation, and because it denies the rights, dignity and liberty of human

personality. If put to the ultimate choice, the Christian must react as did the early Christian martyrs. They could have saved themselves by the gesture of offering incense to the false gods of Rome. They preferred death to such disloyalty to the one true God. A genuine Christian can never "submit," in the sense of openly approving the perversion of right order known as atheistic Communism.

There remains the problem of "resistance." If it became clear that the only way this nation could defend itself against enemy attack would be war, what kind of war could we in conscience wage? There are nuclear devices available which are so fantastically destructive that whole centers of population could be destroyed. Would we be justified in thus wiping out whole cities, and raining death indiscriminately on hundreds of thousands of people?

In my opinion, the moral dictate here is in the negative. The late Mr. Thomas E. Murray, member of the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission, and outstanding Catholic layman, was firmly convinced that we were not morally justified in using nuclear weapons of the higher order of destructiveness. He did not however advocate non-resistance. It was his conviction that this nation must concentrate on the development of nuclear weapons in the lower order of destructiveness and equip itself with a

wide range of weapons in this order, designed specifically for use on military objectives as such.

"In the present situation of international lawlessness," he wrote, "a total renunciation of nuclear armaments by the United States would mean the betrayal of our moral tradition, which requires that we should not abandon the cause of justice, or leave ourselves unprepared to defend it effectively."

But if the Communists have no moral scruples about using the multi-megaton bomb, and we on the other hand forego its use, are we not, by conceding this advantage, losing the war before it begins? To suppose this is to be unnecessarily pessimistic. Military authorities assure us that the armed forces are capable of pinpointing their attack with nuclear warheads of the lower order,

but of great destructiveness, on a host of specific military targets in Russia. Communist authorities know this, and, with Red China at their back, have no desire to see their military might severely crippled. Is not this as much a deterrent as the threat of totally indiscriminate attacks on cities with bombs whose awesome power is beyond all control, and whose long range radio-activity could rebound fatally even upon ourselves?

President Kennedy, it seems to me, had just this kind of defense in mind when he said in his sober but inspiring speech on the Berlin crisis: "We intend to have a wider choice than humiliation or all out nuclear war." In my opinion, the Christian answer to the problem posed lies precisely in that "wider choice."

CHRISTIAN PEACE

It is no mistake to consider peace, which includes tranquillity and order, as the greatest source of happiness for civil society; everyone must bend his very best efforts to achieving it; and religion itself reaps rich benefits when it fosters and promotes it. Was it not peace that echoed from the strains of the angels' chorus over the cave in Bethlehem when the divine Redeemer was born? Was not peace the very banner of the Gospel that Christ left to His disciples as He was about to depart from the earth? How wonderful, how desirable, how blessed is Christian peace!

But the Sacred Scriptures tell us that the peace that really deserves the homage and respect of Christian men is inseparably bound up with truth, justice, charity; and it cannot stand firm and grow and flourish without a childlike devotion toward God, an anxious concern for the divine will, the carrying out of Christian law, healthy moral standards, growth in charitable activities, social justice, sound laws, fair dealings between employers and employees, progress in all the arts and sciences. The children of the Church are under obligation to exert their every effort toward protecting and fostering it, for they are the salt of the earth. (Matt. 5:13)

Pope John XXIII: The Pope Speaks



POINTED PARAGRAPHS

Christmas and Charity

The feast of Christ's birth, more than any other feast of the year, warms the heart and calls into play feelings and sentiments of good will which otherwise might remain largely dormant. Even old Scrooge, the very model of callousness, found himself softened under the influence of the spirit of Christmas.

Only too often the feelings and sentiments aroused at this season, however, remain unsubstantial. There are people, and not a few of them, who even while they glow at Christmas, could not even give an explanation of what Christmas really means. For such as these the program undertaken in many communities "to put Christ back into Christmas" can effect great good, if they will but heed it.

However, outdoor cribs and religious Christmas cards and Nativity carols are far from sufficient. Christmas is above all a feast of charity. It should be characterized in the eyes of non-Christians by the tangible expression of charity on the part of Christ's followers. Only thus can these pagans be brought to an awareness of the real meaning of Christ's birth as the supreme example of God's love for men.

Here are examples of the kind of charity to which we refer.

Invite an orphan or a child from a broken home to your family circle on Christmas, and treat him as one of the family.

There are 53,000 international students, including 15,000 Catholics, from 130 countries in our American colleges and universities. If you live near a college, make an inquiry as to what you can do to cheer these young exiles at this time, perhaps by an invitation to a holiday dinner.

The term D. P. has a lonely ring. Perhaps there are some of these families in your community who are still bewildered by their new surroundings. Is there not some gesture of kindness you can offer?

The old, the helpless and the poor are often the object of organized charity at this season; they receive baskets of food from various civic and religious groups. This is all to the good. But could you not offer a small personal act of kindness of your own to someone in this category, whether in your own family, or even a complete stranger? Personal kindness has much more worth than the impersonal dropping of a coin in a poor box.

The pagans said of the early Christians: See how they love one another. Perhaps the progress of Christianity has been slow simply because our modern Christian charity

has not been of such a stamp as to attract their special attention and their admiration.

Catholic Higher Learning

Most Catholics are aware of the controversy which has arisen of late years as to whether Catholics are pulling their weight in the various fields of higher learning. Good evidence can be adduced that we are not represented in the ranks of outstanding scientists as strongly as we should be, considering our numbers. Whatever conclusions are to be drawn from the evidence, and whatever causes can be ascribed, one thing is sure, that the Church has from the beginning urged her children to develop their minds to the utmost. The colleges and universities up and down Europe, and more recently in this continent, which were founded under the auspices of the Church, testify to this fact.

The statutes of the Catholic University of America in Washington give cogent expression to the thought of the Church:

"The aim of the Catholic University of America is to search out truth scientifically, to safeguard it, and to apply it to the moulding and shaping of both private and public life. With this aim in view the University imparts, carefully cultivates and promotes learning, and furnishes both students and teachers with the means for scientific research and study, and so directs them that they may properly fulfill their duties toward God, Church and country.

"The University must look to the welfare not only of the students en-

rolled, but also of all the faithful in the United States of America, and hence it should be of help and assistance to schools, colleges, and seminaries, especially by training teachers who shall be qualified to instruct Catholic youth in these institutions. Thus the University should be a national center of Catholic culture, and should be held as such by all."

At this season an appeal is made in many parishes for support of the Catholic University. Catholics of whatever station will no doubt be glad to do what they can to further these noble ideals. They will be in agreement surely with Pope St. Pius X who wrote: "We clearly understand how much a Catholic university of high repute and influence can do toward spreading and upholding Catholic doctrine and furthering the cause of civilization. To protect it, therefore, and to quicken its growth is in Our judgment equivalent to rendering the most valuable service to religion and to country alike."

The Lord Above

The British magazine *Punch* recently, in a satirical vein, published some definitions of current jazz terms. One of them caught our eye as being particularly apropos. The phrase was "*The Lord Above*," frequently found in pseudo-pious popular songs, mainly, one suspects, because "above" rhymes so handily with "love."

This Deity commonly worshipped by popular singers, *Punch* goes on to comment, possesses certain superficial characteristics in common with God, but is never completely so identified, because of the dubious reaction on

sponsor and network. By common consent, these strict sects will not permit the performance of hymns of any accepted religion during programs of popular music, with the exception of Gounod's *Ave Maria*.

The cult of *The Lord Above* possesses a creed of exemplary simplicity. Believers, for instance, believe that if you believe there are angels, there are angels if you believe (see song, "If You Believe"). They believe in the efficacy of prayer, provided that it deals with emotional matters. They are aware of sin, and hold that the most widespread sin is the sin of "loving you," to which they cheerfully confess an average of four times per song. Every kind of sin is redeemed by love, so it is clear that most sin in the popular music world is self-cancelling. The cult has a number of saints, who frequently go "marching in."

The Lord Above, not surprisingly, dwells in *Heaven Above*.

To which we add this final comment: popular song religion, with its shallow emotionalism, is a poor substitute for the real thing.

New Life for Lay Missionaries

Because a third of the human race has never even heard the name of the Son of God, missionary priests are still sent forth to preach, teach, baptize and administer the sacraments—in a word, to save souls. But what do they actually spend their time doing? Too often their spiritual work must be set aside in the press of odd jobs and secular chores, such as pulling teeth and passing out pills, wiring a schoolhouse and greasing an automo-

bile, organizing a credit union, teaching farmers crop rotation and the use of chemical fertilizers, typing appeal letters and sending out press releases. Such things need to be done on missions, just as they need to be done in our home parishes. But they are properly the work of laymen, not of priests and religious. Pope John XXIII advises: "Care must be taken not to clutter and obstruct the apostolic work of the missions with an excessive quantity of secular projects." Missionary priests should be allowed to "devote themselves to their task of propagating the faith, and to other pursuits aimed directly at personal sanctification and eternal salvation."

Why are lay missionaries needed?

Able and dedicated laymen are urgently needed to advance the social apostolate in mission lands, to civilize and Christianize the environment so that the spiritual work of the priest may take root and prosper. "Let us pray fervently to God that the numbers of these generous Christians be multiplied," continues His Holiness, "and that God's support will never be absent in their difficulties and labors, which they are meeting with truly apostolic spirit."

Where laymen are now sought in small numbers, they may soon be called for in legions. Before this new decade is ended, thousands upon thousands of lay missionaries may be needed in the awakening mission lands as doctors, dentists, nurses, teachers, engineers, mechanics, plumbers, printers, carpenters, electricians, agriculturalists, journalists, secretaries, social workers and just plain helpers. Many are needed to

day to exercise these professions, independently in some mission territories and under the guidance of priests and bishops in others.

Lay missionaries are able to enter more completely than priests and nuns into the life of local communities, thus winning the people's trust and helping to change their convictions. They are needed to set good examples of Catholic living in a secular, scientific world, so that individuals and families in mission lands will be inspired to put on Christ more fully. They are needed to train local Catholics for responsible positions of leadership, so that the social and economic orders of society may be Christianized. By means of selfless missionary laymen God's healing power can thus penetrate into pockets of sickness, superstition and secularism around the entire world. — *Oliver Barres in Worldmission*

Highway Murder

In 1960 nearly 40,000 persons were killed in traffic accidents on United States highways. This averages out to more than 100 deaths each day. In a large percentage of cases, the accident causing death can be traced back to recklessness in one form or another. Cardinal Cushing of Boston, writing in the *Boston Pilot*, has some apposite remarks to make on this subject:

"Reckless speeding, drunken driving, contemptuous violation of traffic signals, weaving in and out of line without regard for plainly marked road markings — these are sins before God no less than offenses punishable by state law.

"The time has come when this question must be put to himself by every auto driver when he is preparing to go to confession: 'Have I willfully and carelessly driven in such a way as to endanger human life?' ...

"We are bound by God's law never to take unnecessary risks with our own lives or with those of our fellow human beings. When we do so, we are violating the fifth commandment, even though we may be fortunate to avoid the hideous reality of murder itself."

Cardinal Cushing stated that he felt duty bound in conscience to demand that Catholics place this problem high on the list of the problems which concern the state of their soul before God.

"Let us promise to drive safely," he concluded, "and let us regard the keeping of this promise as pertaining to the firm purpose of amending our lives which is essential for the forgiveness of our sins."



LIGUORIANA



The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ

Chapter XIII—Love Does Not Brood over an Injury; Takes no Pleasure in Wrongdoing, but Rejoices at the Victory of Truth.

By St. Alphonsus Liguori

Edited by

M. J. Huber, C.S.S.R.

A PERSON who loves Jesus Christ truly wants only what Jesus wants.

Love and truth are inseparable companions. Love knows that God is goodness itself; therefore it detests iniquity, which is opposed to the will of God, and it finds pleasure in nothing except what is pleasing to God.

The person who lives with the love of God in his heart bothers little about what others say of him; he gives all his attention to the task of pleasing God. Blessed Henry Suso said: "Truly that man stands high with God who seeks to live up to the truth and then cares not how he is judged or treated by his fellow men."

We have said repeatedly that all holiness and perfection consist in overcoming self and in doing the will of God. Now let us discuss this truth in greater detail. If we wish to become saints this should be our never-changing program: never to follow our own will, but always to follow the will of God. That is the substance of all the divine counsels and commandments — to do and to suffer what God wills, as God wills. As we

follow this program, we ought all the while pray to God for liberty of spirit — the liberty of spirit which enables us to embrace everything that is pleasing to Jesus Christ no matter how unpleasant it may be to self-love or our regard for human respect.

The love of Jesus Christ gives to them who love Him a complete indifference: the bitter and the sweet are alike to them; they seek nothing to please themselves; they seek everything that is pleasing to God. They are equally content to occupy themselves in great affairs or matters of little importance; in pleasant things or in tasteless tasks. All they ask is to please God.

St. Augustine says: "Love God, and do what you please." Whoever really loves God seeks nothing but the good pleasure of God; he finds all his happiness in pleasing God.

St. Theresa writes: "Whoever seeks only the happiness of his beloved is happy over everything that pleases his beloved. This is the result of perfect love: it makes one forget his own advantage and satisfaction and makes him think only of how he can give pleasure to the beloved, honor the beloved, and make others honor the beloved. How true it is, dear Lord, that all our troubles come

from not keeping our eyes fixed on You! If we would only look to You, the true Way, how quickly we would have in our grasp that for which we are forever reaching! But we stumble and fall a thousand times as we try to go forward, and even stray off and get lost, because we fail to keep watching the true way." Say it a thousand times — and then once more — the only goal of all our thoughts, our actions, our desires, our prayers should be the good pleasure of God. This should be our road to holiness — to walk according to the will of God.

God wants every one of us to love Him with our whole heart. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart." (Matt. 22:37) With your whole heart! That person loves God with his whole heart who sincerely asks with the apostle: "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6) Lord, tell me all that You want me to do, for I am determined to do it!

Let us understand well that when we want what God wants, we want what is best for ourselves; for God certainly wants nothing but what is for our greatest good. St. Vincent de Paul said: "Conformity to the divine will is the treasure of Christians and the remedy for all ills because it embraces renunciation of self and union with God and the practice of every virtue." Right here, in fact, is all holiness: "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

Jesus Christ has promised: "Not a hair of your head shall perish." This is the same as saying that the Lord rewards every good desire we have

to please Him and every trial we peacefully accept to conform to His divine will.

St. Theresa said that the Lord never sends an affliction without rewarding it with some favor, if only we embrace the affliction with patience and in conformity with His divine will. Our conformity with the divine will, however, must be unconditional; we must not make any reservations or lay down conditions. It must be final, without recall. Here is the summit of holiness, and to attain it should be the purpose of all our activity, all our desires, all our prayers.

Some devout souls, reading of the ecstasies and visions of St. Theresa, St. Philip Neri and others, find budding within themselves a desire to share such moments of intimate union with God. Such desires should be rejected at once; they are opposed to humility. To reach holiness we should desire true union with God, which consists in complete conformity of our will with God's will.

St. Theresa writes: "They deceive themselves who imagine that union with God consists in ecstasies, visions, the joys of sensible devotion. It consists in nothing else but the subjection of our will to the will of God; and this subjection is complete when our will is entirely detached from creatures and united with the will of God alone in such a way that it moves always and everywhere in harmony with His will. This is the true and essential union, O Lord, which I have always desired and which I continually beg of Thee." Then she adds: "Yes, how many of us say this, and seem to desire only

this; but weak, miserable creatures that we are, how few of us are really sincere!" She is right. Many of us say: "Lord, I give You my entire will; I desire nothing but what You desire." But when God takes us at our word and lets trouble come, we cannot accept His will. Then we begin complaining. Bad luck always looks for us first! Life is nothing but gloom and unhappiness!

If we would persevere in our resolution to live according to the will of God in all adversities, we should certainly become holy. More than that, we should be the happiest persons in the world. Why not, therefore, keep trying day after day to keep our will united with God's will in everything that happens whether it is pleasing or distressing?

The Holy Spirit admonishes us: "Winnow not with every wind." (Eccclus. 5:11) Some people are like weather vanes that turn about with every wind that blows; if the wind is favorable to their plans, they are gay and gentle; but if the wind changes and blows across their path, they wrap themselves in a rough mantle of gloom. And so they seem never to become holier. They remain lost in the great crowd of people who are never truly happy, because in this world adversity is much more common than prosperity.


St. Dorotheus said: "To take everything as it comes from the hand of God is an excellent means of preserving continual peace and tranquility of heart. That is why the ancient fathers of the desert never gave evidence of being irritated or despon-

dent; no matter what happened to them, they received each moment cheerfully from the hand of God."

HAPPINESS is for those people who know how to live in total abandonment to the divine will. They are neither puffed up by success or deflated by failure, for they know that success and failure alike come from their loving Father's hand. God's will is the only rule of their life. They do only what God wills. They desire only what God desires. They do not undertake a multitude of tasks, since they are content to do perfectly whatever they believe God wants them to do. That is why they prefer the most trifling tasks of their state in life to great and glorious achievements; for they know that the latter might be prompted by self-love while the former are surely in accordance with the will of God.

We, too, shall be happy if we accept whatever God sends — accept it with perfect conformity to His divine will, not caring whether or not it is according to our natural likes and dislikes. The holy Mother de Chantal said: "When shall we finally learn to savor the sweetness of the divine will in everything that happens to us, considering nothing but the divine good pleasure, which certainly sends, with equal love and for our greater good, both adversity and prosperity? When shall we really throw ourselves into the arms of our most loving heavenly Father, abandoning unreservedly to Him the care of ourselves and of all that belongs to us, reserving for ourselves only the desire of pleasing God?"

BOOKS



THOMAS TOBIN, C.S.S.R.

We recommend that books listed or reviewed in **THE LIGUORIAN** be purchased at your local bookstore. If you cannot obtain the book in that way, you may write to **THE LIGUORIAN** for further information.

I. FICTION

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| The Edge of Sadness (\$5.00) | Edwin O'Connor |
| Powerful novel of Irish lay and clerical life. | |
| Letters of Nicodemus (\$3.95) | Jan Dobraczinski |
| Novelized life of Nicodemus, the disciple of Christ. | |
| The Fountain of Arethusa (\$2.50) | Maurice Zermatten |
| Psychological French novel of conflict in small village. | |
| The Bells of Rome (\$4.95) | Stenius Goran |
| Story of one man's discovery of God in Rome. | |
| The Agony and the Ecstasy (\$5.95) | Irving Stone |
| Life and work of Michelangelo. | |
| The Man Who Captivated New York (\$3.50) | Rosalie Lieberman |
| Tale of a simple monk who worked wonders. | |
| Monsignor Connolly of St. Gregory's (\$3.50) | Vincent McCorry, S.J. |
| A pastor and parish life. | |
| Now And At the Hour (\$3.00) | Robert Cormier |
| Soul portrait of a man dying of cancer. | |
| The Refugee (\$4.50) | Helen Fowler |
| An artist's struggle to regain meaning of life. | |
| Bodies and Souls (\$3.95) | Dan Herr, Joel Wells |
| 14 Catholic murder mysteries. | |
| The Tiber Was Silver (\$3.95) | Michael Novak |
| Soul struggle of seminarian in Rome before ordination. | |

II. BIOGRAPHIES

- | | |
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| Lay Siege to Heaven (\$4.50) | Louis de Wohl |
| Fictionalized biography of St. Catherine of Siena. | |
| Therese (\$3.25) | Dorothy Day |
| Sympathetic portrait by foundress of Catholic worker. | |
| Padre Pio (\$4.95) | Oscar de Liso |
| Interesting story of Italian stigmatic. | |
| A Nun With a Gun (\$3.50) | Eddie Doherty |
| Sr. Stanislaus, one of the pioneers in Charity Hospital, New Orleans. | |

- The Poor Old Liberal Arts (\$4.00)** Robert I. Gannon, S.J.
Autobiography of president of Fordham University.
- Promises to Keep (\$5.00)** Agnes W. Dooley
Portrait of Dr. Tom Dooley by his mother.
- Saints in Action (\$4.95)** William Thomas Walsh
Studies by skilled biographer.
- The Search for St. Therese (\$3.95)** Peter-Thomas Rohrbach, O.C.D.
New appraisal of life and legend of Little Flower.
- Apostle in A Top Hat (\$3.95)** James Derum
Well-written story of Frederic Ozanam.
- Monsieur Vincent (\$3.95)** Henri Daniel-Rops
St. Vincent de Paul as seen by the French academician.
- The Day Christ Was Born (\$3.50)** Jim Bishop
Sequel to *The Day Christ Died*.
- The Book of Mary (\$4.95)** Henri Daniel-Rops
Comprehensive account of our Lady in word and picture.

III. GENERAL BOOKS

- Perspective for Renewal (\$2.25)** Mary Perkins Ryan
The layman's role in the world.
- To Live is Christ (\$3.00)** R. W. Gleason, S.J.
Profound explanation of role of Christ in the Christian life.
- Approach to Calvary (\$2.95)** Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B.
Christian suffering in the light of the way of the cross.
- Go To Heaven (\$4.50)** Bishop Fulton J. Sheen
How modern man must go to God.
- Sanctified in Truth (\$3.50)** Leo J. Trese
The Christian pattern for life.
- Movies, Morals and Art (\$3.50)** Frank Getlein,
Sympathetic examination of the movies. Harold Gardiner, S.J.
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Complete historical presentation. Msgr. Philip Hughes
- Catholics in Conversation (\$3.95)** Donald McDonald
Excellent conversations with leaders on American Catholic scene.
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John Hughes, Knute Rockne, Alfred E. Smith, Cavalry Hero.

2. Patron Saint Series (\$2.00)

Ages 6-9

Joseph, Mary, Margaret, Barbara, David, Bernard.

3. Vision Books (\$2.25)

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4. Clarion Books (\$2.50)

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The Blood Red Crescent, Fingals Quest, Son of Charlemagne, Two Trumpeteers of Vienna.

5. Banner Books (\$2.00)

Ages 8-12

Armorer of the Confederacy, Bishop Carroll, Father of the American Navy, The 49th Star, Sister-Nurses of the Civil War.

6. Catholic Treasury Books (\$2.50)

Ages 8-12

Amazing John Tabb, Brother Dutton, Frontier Bishop, Medicine for Wildcat, Red Hugh, Prince of Donegal, The Thunder-maker.

LUCID INTERVALS

A lawyer was engaged in a friendly discussion with a physician over the relative merits of their respective professions.

"I don't say that all lawyers are villains," said the doctor, "but you'll have to admit that your profession doesn't make angels of men."

"No," retorted the lawyer, "you doctors certainly have the best of us there."

The surgeon was discussing a forthcoming operation with his wealthy Texan patient. "Would you prefer to have just a local anesthetic," he asked.

"I can afford the best, Doc," boomed the Texan, "get me something imported."

Speaker: "Thank you, sir, for staying to listen to me when everybody else walked out."

Listener: "Don't thank me. I'm the next speaker."

Teen-age girl: "Is the dance formal or can I wear my own clothes?"

Personnel Manager: "For this job we want a responsible man."

Applicant: "That's me. Wherever I've worked, if anything went wrong, they said I was responsible."

Old lady to tramp: "Are you really content to spend your life walking about the country begging?"

Tramp: "No mam, I often wish I had a car."

Johnny asked so many questions that his father ran out of patience.

"Look here," he said, "didn't you ever hear of the boy who asked so many questions that he turned into a question mark?"

Johnny thought for a moment.

"Papa," he asked, "how did he keep the little dot under himself from falling off?"

"My wife kisses me evenings when I get home."

"Affection?"

"No, investigation."

FILE 13

If you keep your mind sufficiently open people will throw a lot of rubbish into it.

Why is it that a doctor's prescription is so hard to read, when his bill is so clear?

Irish greeting: Long life to you, and may you never see your wife a widow.



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